The Child Advocate

MARISOL GARCÍA

Marisol García began her service as the **Commonwealth's Child Advocate** in June 2026.

Previously, Child Advocate García was **Deputy Director at Health Law Advocates** for over a decade, where she developed and led the Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids, a statewide legal services program that has represented thousands of families to overcome barriers to mental health care for children. Under her leadership, the program expanded from a small pilot into a statewide initiative -- improving children's access to care, reducing reliance on emergency services, and keeping children out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Child Advocate García **directly represented children in court for more than two decades,** representing children and parents in Care & Protection, Child Requiring Assistance, Delinquency, and administrative hearings related to disability benefits and special education services. She was also appointed as a Guardian ad litem by the Juvenile Court.

She is **co-chair of the American Bar Association Children's Rights Litigation Committee** and received the **Latino Excellence on the Hill Award in 2025** and was selected as one of **Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly's Top Women of Law in 2022.**

She served as an elected school committee member for the Town of Westford from 2022 to 2025, and as an adjunct instructor for the **Boston University School of Public Health**, **William James College**, and the **University of Massachusetts at Lowell**. She has a Juris Doctorate from **Northeastern University**.



Contact The Office of the Child Advocate

Press Contact:
Ari Fertig
ari.fertig@mass.gov

OCA Complaint Line
childadvocate@mass.gov
(617) 979-8360

OCA
MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Child Advocate

About the Office of the Child Advocate

The OCA is an independent state agency with oversight and ombudsperson responsibilities. Our mission is to ensure that children receive timely, safe, and effective state services, with a particular focus on ensuring that children in the care and custody of the Commonwealth receive humane and dignified treatment at all times.

Oversight

The OCA reviews individual cases, including when a child has been seriously harmed while receiving state services or is in an out-of-home setting. We collect data, review policies and practices, and conduct investigations when appropriate. We also meet regularly with leaders of state agencies and follow up on OCA recommendations for changes in policy and practice from our investigations, public policy reports, and ongoing work groups.

Youth and Family Engagement

The OCA operates a Complaint Line to answer questions, refer individuals to resources, and resolve issues with state agencies. Through our Youth Engagement Program, we meet directly with the young people we serve, visiting young people in congregate care programs and other youth-serving community programs.

Policy Research and Advocacy

The OCA studies systemic issues, data, and trends to understand the larger challenges children and families face in state systems and advocates for changes in law, policy, and practice to address those challenges. We chair numerous Boards and Commissions and lead working groups to identify and address areas for systems-level change.

Training and Technical Assistance

Through the OCA's Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma, we provide training and technical assistance to child-serving agencies and organizations, helping professionals put trauma-responsive practices into action. The OCA also creates and provides trainings such as our Mandated Reporter Training to help professionals better identify and respond to abuse and neglect. We partner with state agencies to develop, pilot, and evaluate new initiatives and programs to better serve young people, families, and their communities.