



5 Tips for Meeting with Your Legislator

- 1. Prepare.** Learn a little bit about your legislator. You'll find a biography online (e.g., just type in the name, or go to www.leg.wa.gov). Prepare what you want to say. Include who you are (include your name, any organizations you are part of, and if appropriate, that you live in their district) what your issue is about, why you care, and what you want the legislator to do. Expect that you may meet with staff if the legislator's schedule changes.
- 2. At the meeting, deliver your message and listen.** Ask questions. You can be a better advocate if you can learn how much they know, concerns they have, any personal connections to your issue, and hear their questions.
- 3. Ask for a commitment.** As one legislator told a group: "Don't just ask for my *support*. In theory, I can support anything. If you want my VOTE, ask for my VOTE." If your legislator is supportive, thank them. Ask them to take a specific action in support such as voting a certain way, sponsoring a bill or asking their colleagues for support. If your legislator is undecided, ask them to look at some additional information or talk to the bill sponsor to learn more. If you offer to send more information, be sure to follow up.
- 4. Leave the door open for future advocacy.** The legislator who is your strongest opposition today, might be the vote you need on a different issue tomorrow. Be careful not to alienate, even if you strongly disagree. Be polite and focus on your goal.
- 5. Follow up.** Leave your contact information. Send a short thank you note. If your legislator made a commitment, thank them, and restate what he or she promised.

For more information contact Children's Alliance.
www.childrensalliance.org or 1.800.854.KIDS (5437)

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