

Advocacy 101: How to Advocate Effectively



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The Basics: What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is:

- Organized action in support of an idea or cause; constituents educating elected officials
- The power of collective voice: When we come together around a single cause, we amplify it

Can I advocate?

- **Yes!** You do not need to be an expert in policy to advocate, you are already an expert at what you do in this field



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The Key Ingredients for Effective Advocacy

- ☑ Being a constituent/bringing forward a local context
- ☑ Presenting expertise or first-hand experience
- ☑ Crafting a compelling case
- ☑ Creating relationships



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I Don't Follow Politics So I Can't Advocate...

Wrong!!!

Your experience and knowledge are invaluable assets to lawmakers.

- Lawmakers are not expert on every issue before them
- Lawmakers rely on outside information to help inform decision making
- You are not expected to be an expert on policymaking– your expertise lies in the work you do every day



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Effective Advocacy Accomplishments

- Educating lawmakers about CEC priorities
- Connecting policy priorities to a Member's home district or state
- Building relationships with Members and staff
- Establishing oneself as an expert on a specific topic and becoming a trusted resource



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Advocacy Gets Results

CEC Emergency IDEA Funding Request, March 2020*

Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$11.3b for IDEA Part B | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$11b for IDEA Part B |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500m for IDEA Part C | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$500m for IDEA Part C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$400m for Section 619 | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$400m for Section 619 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300m for IDEA Part D | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$300m for IDEA Part D |

***Over 8,000 letters sent**



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Next Steps

- Participate in the annual Special Education Legislative Summit, where you can join with your colleagues to advocate!
- Learn about weekly updates from Washington, DC in the Policy Insider:
Check your inbox on Fridays or find it at
<https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-insider>
- Reach out with any questions!
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