



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON
**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

5 Steps for A Successful Meeting with a Legislator!

1. Say who you are.

Make sure to let the legislator know you're a constituent and any professional or personal identifiers that might be helpful (i.e. I'm a parent of a child with disabilities, I'm a health care professional who works with low-income kids, I'm a child care provider)

2. Say who you are with or representing

(If you are there on behalf of or connected to an organization. Give a (very brief!) description of that organization.)

3. Say why you are there—the one sentence version!

(i.e. I'm here today to urge you to support the BadgerCare Plus proposal and to support funding for quality after school programs; I'm here today to tell you about my experiences working with families in Dane County who are on W-2 and urge you to support the Real Work, Real Pay Transitional Jobs program that's in the Governor's budget; I want to talk to you about why I support quality early care & education programs and why I hope that you'll support the creation of a quality rating system)

4. Make your case—in 3-5 minutes.

You generally will only have a legislator's attention & time for 15 minutes so you need to be able to make your case on your issue(s) very briefly & succinctly. Think ahead of time about what your key points are and what messages you really want the legislator and his/her staff to hear. Imagine what notes you'd like to have on the staff person's note pad from your meeting and speak in ways that make sure that your key points are the "take away" points that the legislator and his/her staff have recorded!

5. Ask for something specific!

Legislators can do a lot of different things to support or advance your issue. They can: sponsor a bill or amendment, tell you if they're going to vote in favor or against, come to your community and tour your site to learn more about your issue, come to your community and meet with a larger group of advocates, participate in a press event, request that research be done by one of the legislative agencies on your issue, tell you who else they think you need to talk to on the issue, etc. But you have to ask specifically for what you want!

Also...

- ✓ Leave something in writing for the legislator and his/her staff—try your best to leave only ONE page (front and back is ok) behind!
- ✓ Make sure to ask if there is any other information or answers the legislator or staff would like—and then follow-up!
- ✓ Ask the legislator if he/she has other ideas on how they might help you (they may have ideas that you may not have considered)
- ✓ At the end of the meeting, visually review what you agreed to do for the legislator and what the legislator agreed to do for you.
- ✓ After the meeting, be sure to get the legislator what you promised in a timely manner.

