

Early Childhood Advocacy for Beginners | Part II

By Tarah Kadzielawski

In [Part I](#), I talked about ways to start advocating by sharing your story in informal conversations. Today, I'll share thoughts on participating in more formal advocacy work—the kind in which you talk to a legislator or policymaker.

If you are ready for more formal advocacy work but don't know where to begin, I would strongly encourage you to find an organization that is holding an advocacy event or has an advocacy toolkit which you can use.

REFLECTING BACK ON MY FIRST FORMAL ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE

The first time I participated in this type of advocacy was with Illinois Action for Children at a Parent Rally Day event. I was a director of a center at the time and everything about the rally event made me feel more comfortable with the process. We recruited parents to come. We rode on a bus to the state capitol. The president and CEO gave an inspiring speech to get the parents and other advocates from across the state pumped up to be there. There was a strong, organized, and consistent message. We were given talking points, were shown how to call our legislators out of session to talk with us, and were given assistance navigating through the maze of legislator offices so we could meet with them.

Even with all of this help I still felt intimidated to call upon a state legislator. In hindsight, however, I'm not sure why I was so nervous. My legislator works for me! I should be able to speak to him or her about issues I feel are important.

That said, I know this is not something I would have ever done without guidance. It is great to find an organization which is dedicated to helping support novice advocates. I'm quite sure that every state has an organization that can help with advocacy actions. Here are a few resources to get you started:

[Illinois Action for Children Advocacy Tool Kit](#)

[Strong Start for Children advocacy Tool Kit](#)

[The Ounce Advocacy Took Kit](#)

[McCormick Center Research Notes | Speaking Up and Speaking Out:](#)

[The Director as Advocate for the Early Childhood Workforce](#)

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