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Beyond the Exam Room: Stories of Legislative Advocacy and Skills to Help You Make a Difference

Advocacy Workbook

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Beyond the Exam Room: Stories of Legislative Advocacy and Skills to Help You Make a Difference - Workshop Workbook

About this Workbook:

This workbook was developed to accompany the workshop of the same title presented at the 2018 Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP) Annual Meeting. This workbook represents the collaborative effort of the authors to enhance this workshop while providing attendees a small resource guide.

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Workshop Description:

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric (DBP) fellows and trainees from other disciplines, as well as professionals in practice, regularly advocate for their patients' and families' individual needs within the medical, educational and community systems as part of routine clinical care. However, advocacy beyond the exam room, with the goal of changing state and federal policies and practices, is often more challenging for trainees and practicing professionals alike due to self-perceived lack of comfort and knowledge about how to advocate effectively. Time constraints and multiple competing responsibilities also result in barriers to advocacy on the part of DBP professionals, supporting the need for education on how to advocate effectively and efficiently by leveraging existing tools, resources and platforms.

In 2017 the SDBP Advocacy Committee, with support from its partners at the Association for University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and with input from fellowship Program Directors, initiated a three-year series of workshops designed to teach trainees the necessary skills to advocate for children with disabilities at the individual, local, state and federal levels. This year's workshop provides trainees and practicing professionals in developmental and behavioral-related fields with the tools to effectively advocate at the state and federal levels. It builds upon the foundations established in the 2017 workshop by providing opportunities for attendees to practice skills related to legislative advocacy, including effecting framing messages for policy makers using a variety of formats. The workshop aims for participants to leave feeling empowered to advocate and to feel that engaging in advocacy is a natural extension of their already strong commitment to serving children and families.

Workshop Goals:

- To teach advocacy skills and tools and to provide opportunities to practice these skills in a risk-free environment.
- To empower attendees to engage in advocacy at the state and federal levels.

Workshop Objectives:

- Briefly review current legislative issues affecting DBP practice.
- Discuss effective practices for state and federal legislative advocacy.
- Learn advocacy skills and strategies by developing an "elevator pitch" that applies to a variety of platforms including letter and email writing, telephone calls, social media and face-to-face legislative visits.
- Practice and apply skills learned in the context of current DBP-related issues.

How to Use this Workbook:

This is a take-away for you to use during today's workshop. It is also designed to be used afterwards as well to help you reflect on your advocacy activities, jot down your ideas and potential topics for advocacy, and have a few resources available to help you on your advocacy journey.

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Navigating Key Legislative Issues:

Tools and resources for tracking current federal legislation:

- www.congress.gov
 - www.house.gov
 - www.senate.gov
- www.govtrack.us
- www.aucd.org
- Professional and community-based organizations (e.g. www.apa.org, www.thearc.org)

Tools and resources for tracking current state legislation:

What are my priority issues?

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Discussion Prompts for Breakout Session #1:

- Personal experiences with advocacy
- Identifying your key issues

Questions:

What immediately comes to mind when you think of advocacy?

What opportunities for advocacy are built into your role as a physician or other health professional?

Describe a situation in which you advocated effectively for a patient or family.

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Describe a situation in which you wanted to be an advocate but didn't feel like you had the resources, tools, knowledge, and/or support to do so effectively.

Identify an issue that impedes your ability to provide high quality person- and family-centered clinical care.

What changes would you like to see?

What are some of the institutional and/or systems level forces at play?

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Who are potential allies or partners?

What barriers can you anticipate?

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Framing Your Message Effectively:

- **Consider your target audiences.** Who are you trying to move and what motivates them to take action?
- **Engage all relevant stakeholders.** Issues impact patients and families, health professionals, and community members differently. Those in influential positions need to hear all perspectives.
- **Lead with your vision.** Make sure the problem is understood, but be especially clear about what would be better if the problem were addressed.
- **Data tells stories and stories tell stories.** Strive for a balanced approach that incorporates easily digestible quantitative information and memorable (due to source and/or content) testimony.

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Skill-Builder - Delivering Your Message in Writing:

What You Need to Know:

Email or Letter?

- Hand written letters receive more attention than preprinted materials, but consider how urgent the matter is. Email may be the best option to ensure the correspondence arrives in a timely manner.

When a letter or email arrives, a legislative correspondent verifies if the sender is a constituent. They then route or tally the message:

- Important or compelling information is given to a legislative assistant.
- Messages that are unique or compelling are shared with the Congress member.
- A summary of emails and letters is given at an issue briefing prior to the vote.

You do not have to reinvent the wheel; online templates are available on the AUCD, APA, and AAP websites.

Tips for Writing your Congressman

- *Be Direct.* Each letter should cover one issue that is stated clearly in the email subject line and/or the first sentence of the letter. Identify yourself as a constituent by providing your address.
- *Be Informative.* Share your views as an expert and cite the bill number of the relevant legislation (as appropriate).
- *Be Inquisitive.* Ask for feedback regarding the policymaker's perspective and how he or she intends to vote. Responses vary by office.
- *Be Factual and Courteous.* Rely on facts but provide information about how the issue impacts your life or the lives of those you represent. Avoid personal attacks or threats of using influence.
- *Be Constructive.* Offer recommendations and speak from a positive perspective about the issue.
- *Be Specific.* Explain the community relevance of the issue and speak from a first person perspective, citing examples from your experience.
- *Be Helpful.* Provide your contact information and offer to provide additional information, if desired.
- *Be Appreciative.* Acknowledge their attention to the issue and thank them later if they vote your way.
- *Be Concise.* Keep your letter to one page or email to 500 words or less.

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(Modified from “The Psychologist’s Guide to Advocacy,” apa.org)

EMAIL SUBJECT: Act Now to Support Suicide Prevention Programs!

Dear Senator/Representative [*LAST NAME*]:

As a psychologist/graduate student from [*ORGANIZATION/NAME OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION*], I am writing to urge you to cosponsor *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization*.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization is bipartisan, budget neutral, and would reauthorize and maintain a number of critical programs that address the mental health needs of young people. It strengthens programs administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) by allowing funds to be used for activities such as mental health and substance use disorder services, education, training, and outreach regarding mental health to students, families, faculty, and staff.

First authorized in 2004, *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act* has increased access to mental health and substance use disorder services on our nation’s college and university campuses, as well as supported critically important suicide prevention initiatives for states and Tribes. Unfortunately, suicide remains the second-leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24. Please ensure that these vital youth suicide programs are maintained through *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization*!

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
[*NAME/TITLE/INSTITUTION*]

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR EMAIL ON CAPITOL HILL?

- 1) A Legislative Correspondent downloads messages.
- 2) Email sender is verified as a constituent.
- 3) Emails are routed, printed, and/or tallied.
- 4) Important/compelling emails are given to a Legislative Assistant.
- 5) Unique/moving emails are shared with Member.
- 6) Email summary given at issue briefing before vote.

(apa.org)

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Skill-Builder - Delivering Your Message via Phone Calls:

Introduction

In a large volume on a single issue, phone calls can bring an office to a halt. Why?

- One phone call represents the voice of 1,000 constituents to your lawmaker.
- Phones ringing off the hook are nearly impossible for a lawmaker to ignore compared to a flooded inbox.
- Physical mail has to go through anthrax clearance so it takes too long.

Phone calls can bring legislative issues right to the top of the mind of a lawmaker. They are impossible to ignore for the whole staff. They might trigger the lawmaker to put out a statement on their position on the issue, if they haven't already.

Exercise #1

You have already looked up your lawmakers, now add them to your phone contacts. You will be calling them repeatedly.

What happens when they pick up?

Voicemail

Easy! Leave your message. Voicemails do get counted.

Live person

Representatives in Congress may not be able to respond to individual phone calls, so you will likely reach a staffer. Your odds of speaking directly to your lawmaker may be higher if you contact local or state officials.

In any case, this is **also easy!** You will need to provide basic personal information, like your name and city to verify constituency. Then you will deliver your message.

What you need to know:

- They are busy – the calls are not very interactive.
- You will not be quizzed or interrogated; they will not argue with you.
- They will be polite and listen.
- The staffer is likely using some kind of form or spreadsheet to record your call, for compiling reports to your lawmaker. That means it's critical to name your issues specifically.
- You might get a brisk "Thanks for calling; I'll pass that along," "I'll make a note of that," or a more enthusiastic "Yes, we agree!"
- If your lawmaker has already put out a statement on the issue, they will read it to you or direct you to the statement.

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Your message

The way your points reach a lawmaker depends on how many calls the office is getting at the time and how you present your story. Scripts can be helpful and templates are widely available online, but highly personal stories are more likely to be passed up the chain rather than just be recorded. Your message should be short, clear, concise, memorable, relatable, and persuasive. Time is valuable – keep it to 5 minutes at the most. Writing out exactly what you want to say during a call helps to keep a message simple and to the point.

Exercise #2 -

Plan what you will say:

Your greeting – who you are, your address, and what you do (this lends credibility):

(Hi! My name is Jane Smith and I am a pediatrician working with children with developmental disabilities, as well as a constituent of your district, residing at 123 Anywhere Street in Anytown USA.)

Your talking points – know your issue and where it is in the legislative process, give 2-3 key points on why it is important:

Tie in a personal story – give anecdotes from your own practice, your own experience; state why this is important for you or for someone you know, your community/state:

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State what you would like to see – highlight solutions or inform how they can help bring about a solution:

Conclusion – make it a strong one, in case they try to cut you off:

Tips:

- Make your presentation relevant to your lawmaker's concerns/interests, which you might have already researched (*refer to p.23*) or learned by following them on social media.
- You can use data to back up your pitch, but use plain language and avoid too much technical jargon and too many statistics.
- Personal stories put human faces to issues and connect the message to what is happening locally. Stories bring policy to life.

Phone calls for action alerts

All you have to do is call and say vote FOR or vote AGAINST – that's it. Voicemails get counted towards number of calls in support of/against an issue.

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How to call your lawmaker in 6 steps:

1. Block time on your calendar
 - a. Calls don't take long (1-5 minutes), but you don't want to be rushed
 - b. Block more time for your first call to prepare
 - c. Scheduling it works as a reminder to prevent procrastination
 - d. At the scheduled time, go sit somewhere quiet
2. Write out EXACTLY what you want to say (Refer to Exercise #2)
3. Take a deep breath and dial
 - a. Voicemail
Leave your message (i.e., read your script). Voicemails do get counted.
If it is full, press 0 to get to a receptionist who might take your message, or transfer you to a voicemail that is not full
 - b. Live person
Be courteous, kind, and firm
4. Ask to talk to the right person – e.g. the health policy staffer, immigration staffer, etc.
5. Have a quick conversation (i.e., read your script)
6. Say "Thank you!" and hang up

Extra credit

For those more enthusiastic exchanges, you might invite a local staffer to show up for events you are involved in, in your community, to show them what you are doing. Work on helping them understand and learn what the issues are, and what the impact is to your community. Building relationships is extra credit, because when the staff knows you, if they have a question about a specific issue, you will be the one they call for feedback/input.

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Don't call the people that don't represent you

You need to make sure you call your own officials because:

- People who don't represent you, can't take your comment – you are wasting time calling them.
- Many offices will tell you they'll pass your comment along, because that's the quickest way to get you off the phone. If they actually do pass it along, they'll be passing it along to your members of congress, not their boss. This is a congressional rule (congressional courtesy), but it's also just following the rules of representative democracy. If members of congress listened to you over their own constituents, they'd be depriving their constituents of representation.
- If you're calling to tie up a member's phone lines, then you're depriving their constituents of a chance to be heard.

Resources

- *Here's Why You Should Call, Not Email, Your Legislators*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/us/politics/heres-why-you-should-call-not-email-your-legislators.html>
- *How to call your Senators*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9oBT2-Pivl&t=107s>
- *How to call your reps when you have social anxiety*
<http://echothroughthefog.cordeliadillon.com/post/153393286626/how-to-call-your-reps-when-you-have-social-anxiety>
- *How to Make Your Congressman Listen to You*
<https://www.attn.com/stories/12768/former-congressional-staffer-explains-how-to-make-congressman-listen>
- *AAP Advocacy Training – Working with Decision-Makers*
https://www.aap.org/en-us/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/en-us/Documents/cpti_module3_powerpoint.ppt&action=default

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Skill-Builder - Delivering Your Message Face-To-Face:

- Know your audience.
 - Who are your legislators?
 - What committees do your legislators sit on?
 - What is their stance on the issue(s) you are there to discuss?
 - Who is the legislative aide/policy staffer responsible for that content area?
- Own your expertise.
 - Introduce yourself as a pediatrician/psychologist etc. who is also one of their constituents.
 - Presume that the person you are meeting with loves children and cares about them.
 - Approach the visit as an educator – you are there to help them understand the issue better and you have a wealth of expertise they can access if needed.
- Know your “ask.”
 - Define the issue you want to address
 - Be prepared with a specific “ask”
 - Stay focused
- Present some data, but also tell a story.
 - Put a name and a face to your issue.
- Be prepared for potential responses.
 - Think about how your legislator/staffer might respond (depending on their usual stance on issues), and respond in their own language. For example, if they are a fiscal conservative, be prepared to discuss how your “ask” is actually cost effective and will save the state/federal government money in the long run.
- End it positively.
 - Say thank you
 - Offer to be a resource for them
 - Leave something behind that will help them remember your issue
- Keep in contact, especially at the local level.
 - Legislators and legislative aides have more time to meet with constituents when they are in their home offices.
 - Schedule an appointment at the local office – you may even be able to meet with the legislator himself/herself.

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Breakout Session #2: Developing and Delivering Your Message

Think about your priority issues and the various options for delivering your message to policy makers. Use this space to write your outline and ideas for a phone call script, email, letter or face-to-face visit. Then refine and send your message!

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CALL TO ACTION - Making Time for Advocacy: A 12-Step Process

1. First and foremost, remember that advocacy begins with the ballot box. Make sure you are registered to vote, preferably at your current address. Look up voter registration information for your current residence and fill out an on-line voter registration form or apply for absentee voting. www.vote411.org. Encourage others to register to vote!

2. Narrow your focus. There are hundreds to thousands of possible foci for political advocacy, especially in the current climate of 2018. Narrow your focus to a few potential areas.

See Exercise: Finding your area(s) of focus (page 21)

3. Set aside time in your schedule. Block off time in your calendar for issues that you care about. Anything from 30-60 minutes a week to a month works. Use this time to:

- Research/learn about current policy or bills in your interest area(s). (See tools section.)
- Call your state/federal representative's office to share your opinion. (Keep their contact information in your address book.)
- Volunteer your time. Look for relevant local organizations (even your own institution).
- Donate money to relevant organization(s).
- Post issues and updates on the SDBP Advocacy message board. We are in this together!

See Exercise: Finding time that works! (page 22)

4. Find your key players. It is important to know whom to work with to make change. Elected officials are the key players to legislative change. Knowing names is not always enough. Take some of your blocked off time and do some research. What are they passionate about? How have they voted in the past? Are they sitting on any committees? Use some of these tools provided to find out who your elected officials are. Then commit some web browser time to look them up and see where their thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and values line up. Follow them on Facebook/Twitter!

See Exercise: Finding your elected officials. (page 23)

5. Find your partners. Our voices are stronger together, but sometimes it is hard to find similar voices among the cacophony of political advocates. There are often so many places to begin but we do not have to reinvent the wheel if there is already a team on the ground. Look for who is already working in your areas of interest; it could be:

- Your workplace
- Professional societies/organizations (i.e. SDBP, AAP, SPP, APA, etc.)
- Disability related organizations (i.e. Autism Speaks, AAIDD, CHADD, Zero to Three, etc.)
- Age related organizations (i.e. Zero to Three, etc.)
- Local grassroots coalitions.

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Research them to see if their goals/values align with yours. If you think they are a good fit, sign up for their mailing list, donate, or consider joining.

Look for local chapters within larger organizations. This is the easiest and most efficacious way to get involved!

See *Exercise: Finding your partners.* (page 27)

6. Engaging your partners.

Look in the right places. The best coalitions engage partners who have compelling relationships to either the problem or potential solutions and can add value by providing any of the following resources:

- Information
- Access to influencers (e.g. policymakers) and key messengers (e.g. press)
- Expertise and credibility
- Time
- Money
- Large base of support

Pitch your vision. Potential partners likely already understand the extent of the problem you're trying to address. They need to know the anticipated outcomes of your efforts so they can assess their willingness and capacity to contribute. Be descriptive, yet concise, and always do your research. Help potential partners draw explicit connections between their goals and the vision you've put forth.

Be mindful of equity issues. Those most significantly impacted by the problem you're trying to address, especially partners representing traditionally underserved (cultural and other identity) groups, must be "at the table" and positioned to drive collective decisions.

Proceed with flexibility and caution. Accommodating thoughtful changes to the collective vision based on the input of potential partners can encourage investment, but aligning too closely with the strategic priorities of some can cause friction and even derail efforts.

7. Stay informed.

Continue to sharpen your skills and stay up to date on topics.

Subscribe to information about the topics that you are passionate about. You can use these websites. I also strongly recommend signing up through your professional societies/interest organizations.

You can also use this workbook as well as other online resources to help sharpen your skill set.

- Bill Tracking: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- AAP Policy Page :<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/Pages/Advocacy-and-Policy.aspx>; <http://federaladvocacy.aap.org>; www.aap.org/moc/stgovaffairs
 - Sign up for the weekly email policy brief.
 - They have excellent training modules.
- Follow your legislators on Facebook/Twitter!

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8. Put your specific skill set to use! Remember that we are not community organizers or event planners; use your team to round out your skill set.

Use your own skills in the most effective manner possible. Speak out on topics as they relate to your patients. Plan time to make a phone call to a legislator's office, write an op ed piece, attend a town hall, start/attend a committee, and/or teach others about how to be advocates.

See Exercise: Setting goals for your personal advocacy plan (page 29)

9. Remember, sometimes not saying something is important. Be aware of political and social media related policies at your work place.

Lastoe, Stacy. 'The Answer to: "Can I Get Fired for Talking About Politics at Work?"'
<https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-answer-to-can-i-get-fired-for-talking-about-politics-at-work>.
Accessed 7/9/2018.

10. Know when to say something and reach out!

- Always very valuable when people contact their legislators by phone/in person (even if "just" their aide)
- Legislators actually receive very few calls/inquiries
- It only takes a few for them to take notice on an issue
- Remember, as professionals your voices contain even more weight

11. Remember how to say it effectively!

- Assume legislators/aides actually know nothing about the topic at hand
- Advocating for children crosses party lines, assume nothing when approaching a legislator regardless of their party affiliation
- Explain the basics (science if you must) as simply as possible
- Use patient stories with legislators (more important to them than data)
- This is time to use your elevator pitch!

12. Use this workbook and these exercises!

- Exercise: Finding your area of focus
- Exercise: Finding time that works!
- Exercise: Discovering your elected officials
- Exercise: Finding your advocacy partners
- Exercise: Setting goals for your personal advocacy plan

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Exercise: Finding your area of focus.

List a few clinical problems that keep occurring/you keep stumbling across but do not find an easy solution (i.e. Lack of access/coverage to/for a service, ineligibility for services/treatment, insurance barriers, demographic barriers, budgetary barriers, etc.). Then note the level of the problem (i.e. grassroots, municipal, state, federal/national).

Example:

Insurance coverage for autism services

State/Federal

Clinical problems:

Level:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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Exercise: Finding time that works!

Take a moment and think about your work schedule. What time(s) potentially work for some advocacy time? Aim for a 30 to 60-minute block of time. Mark it below:

Time:	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat/Sun
Early AM, 7-9						
AM, 9-12						
Lunch, 12-1						
PM, 1-4						
Late PM, 4-6						
Evening, 6-later						

How often are you aiming to include this on your calendar? Circle below:

Twice a week - Weekly - Every other week - Monthly

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Exercise: Finding your elected officials.

Use these resources to list your elected officials and their contact information. Make note if they have a specific aide who is the contact for issues of a certain type (i.e. health policy aide).

- <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- <https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/>
- <https://www.usmayors.org/mayors/>

LOCAL:

Mayor: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Political Interests: _____

Aide/Assistant: _____

Contact: _____

Alderman/County Exec: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Political Interests: _____

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STATE:

State Senator: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Committee involvement: _____

Political Interests: _____

State Representative: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Committee involvement: _____

Political Interests: _____

Governor: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Political Interests: _____

Aide/Assistant: _____

Contact: _____

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FEDERAL:

US Representative: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Committee involvement: _____

Political Interests: _____

Aide/Assistant: _____

Contact: _____

US Senator (1): _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Committee involvement: _____

Political Interests: _____

Aide/Assistant: _____

Contact: _____

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US Senator (2): _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Phone/email: _____

Address: _____

Committee involvement: _____

Political Interests: _____

Aide/Assistant: _____

Contact: _____

US President: _____

Term ends/next election: _____

Contact: Online: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

Phone: White House switchboard: 202-456-1414
White House comments line: 202-456-1111
(regular business hours)

Political Interests: _____

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Exercise: Finding your advocacy partners.

Please, please, please, do not reinvent the wheel if it already exists. Take some time and reflect upon the following:

Which professional societies are you a member of? Are you connected to their advocacy committee/division/workgroup? If they do not have one, are you interested in starting one? Who should you contact? Are you subscribed to their advocacy briefings/ mailing list?

Organization:	Active member? (i.e. Dues Paid)	Is there an Advocacy Cmt/ Div/ Group?	Registered with group?	Subscribed to listserv?	Contact person:	Personal goals:
<i>SDBP</i>	<i>(Hope so!)</i>	<i>Yes!</i>	<i>Please do!</i>	<i>Did it!</i>	<i>Dinah Godwin / Marsheena Murray</i>	

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If your list is a little on the empty side or if you are looking to expand, take some time to map out other organizations that exist.

- Your workplace: Is there an advocacy committee in existence? Can you start one?

- Professional societies/organizations (i.e. SDBP, AAP, SPP, APA, etc.) Who else can you get involved with that has goals that align with yours?

- Disability related organizations (i.e. Autism Speaks, AAIDD, CHADD, Zero to Three, etc.). Whose goals align with yours? Do they align with your clinical/research work? How much time/talent/donations will you need to contribute?

- Age related organizations (i.e. Zero to Three, etc.). Similar to above.

- Local grassroots coalitions. Similar to above. Grassroots coalitions can be effective, but can also be a big time commitment (literally herding cats and also moving at a glacial pace, even for advocacy).

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Exercise: Setting goals for your personal advocacy plan

It's time to put it all together. Take a moment and reflect on what you are passionate about changing and how you want to go about making that change. Let's put together some SMART goals for your personal advocacy plan. Make this your first *NEXT* step.

Advocacy topic: _____

End Goal: _____

NEXT step goal: _____

SMART NEXT step goal:

Specific? What will you exactly accomplish?

Measurable? What is your metric?

Achievable? Is it realistic with effort and commitment?

Have the resources to achieve? If not, how will you get them?

Relevant? Why is this goal significant to your life?

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Timely? What is your due date?

Remember, all goals without a deadline are technically just a dream.

Potential Challenges/Obstacles: Potential Solutions:

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Partners. Who will help you?

Future action steps:

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Advocacy Resources

www.apa.org/advocacy	Advocacy page of the American Psychological Association (APA) website; includes information on APA advocacy initiatives and current legislation that affects practice.
www.aucd.org	Website for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, which includes information and advocacy guidance on issues related to disability.
www.childrensdefense.org	Website for the Children’s Defense Fund, a nonprofit child advocacy organization that provides information and recommendations regarding legislation that affects children across all domains.
www.childrenshospitals.org	Website for the Children’s Hospital Association, includes information regarding child advocacy with an emphasis on healthcare issues. The CHA’s “Speak Now for Kids” campaign provides advocacy tools and guidance for professionals and families.
www.congress.gov	Official website of the United States Congress (Senate and House), including links to contact your legislators, committee structure and membership, explanations of the legislative process, status of current legislation, etc.
www.copaa.org	Website for the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, an organization whose mission is to protect the legal and civil rights of students with disabilities.
www.countable.us	Online resource for obtaining summaries of current legislation, an overview of public opinion regarding legislative issues, and links to directly contacting legislators through text or video messaging. A Countable app is also available.
www.govtrack.us	Online resource for tracking legislation (including predictions regarding likelihood of passage), identifying your legislators, tracking legislators’ voting records, and other advocacy-related information.

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www.icivics.org	<p>Founded by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, this interactive website offers free instructional tools, games and lesson plans designed to enhance civics instruction. Though intended for schoolteachers, the tools and games can be useful for medical learners and other audiences as well.</p>
www.kff.org	<p>Website for the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, an independent foundation that engages in research and education regarding national health issues.</p>
www.5calls.org	<p>Provides a simplified framework for advocacy, encouraging individuals to make 5 calls to legislators regarding specific issues. This website does present issues in a partisan manner.</p>
www.ncsl.org	<p>Website for the National Conference of State Legislatures; includes a searchable bill tracking database for all 50 states (located under the Research tab on the home page).</p>
www.wrightslaw.com	<p>Detailed information and case law regarding special education, 504, education law and advocacy.</p>

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Notes/Ideas to take home/Action Plan:
