



Michigan Association for the
Education of Young Children

5 Simple Steps to Master a Meeting with Policymakers

How do people effectively lobby lawmakers? How do I bring about change? Who gets results? The squeaky wheel. Do you want to just affect a change in policy or do you want to set policy that shapes the future? How do you establish and build a strong, consistent relationship with a lawmaker and then become a resource to set early childhood policies for the State of Michigan?

Find your passion! What strikes your heart?

Tell your stories and touch a heart to change a mind!

- 1) Identify your targets. Who should you be talking to? Find your representatives and senators. Identify policymakers and staff members that have an ability to influence and address your early childhood priorities. Additionally, work to identify other individuals who support your priorities and able to build on your message. Ideally, your first meeting is an introduction.
- 2) Request a meeting. Engage staff in the office by learning their roles, responsibilities and priorities in the office (i.e. chief of staff, legislative director, and/or legislative assistants).
- 3) Prepare for your meeting.
 - Do your research to begin to build a relationship. Social media pages, news articles, voting records and websites are good places to get information about a policymaker. Try to find relatable information that is both personal and professional. Does he/she have young children or grandchildren?
 - Who joins you? If you are attending the meeting in a team, it is a good idea to decide how you will hold the meeting together and assign roles for each person.
 - Develop talking points. It is always easier to go in with a plan. What are your “asks” and why?
 - Discuss a follow-up plan. How will you check in? What will you leave and how can you be contacted as a resource for future information?
 - Prepare your materials in advance.
- 4) Have the meeting!
 - Introduce yourself and explain why you are having the meeting.
 - Tell your story and work to relate it to your policy makers work. What is your why? Try your best to make personal connections. Relationship building will set the tone.
 - What is your “ask?” Offer to be a resource. Make the relationship reciprocal.
 - THANK him/her for meeting with you. ASK TO TAKE PICTURES! Leave something behind with information on your topics and your contact information.
- 5) After the meeting.....debrief and think about what went well and what still needs to be done. Make a personal plan for follow-up and intent to cultivate the relationship (email, phone call, additional meeting etc.). POST YOUR PICTURES TO SOCIAL MEDIA! Awareness breeds advocacy! Share your passion!

The Plan

Introduction:

Tell your story:

“Ask” and follow up:

I would like to be a resource to you.....