ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The following examples show how someone might try to develop support for more resources for early childhood programs. This is how they would use the EPIC approach to tailor their message to lawmakers, practitioners and the business community.

LAWMAKERS
I am your constituent and the parent of a child in an early learning program. You know how important it is that we provide opportunities for more than 100 children and their families in your community.

Our community has grown tremendously in the past several years, and more parents are seeking early childhood programs for their children. And yet, at the same time, our programs have seen budget cuts that have limited the quality of our program and the opportunity for our children to receive high-quality early childhood experiences.

Would you call your legislators and ask them to restore funding for early childhood programs?

BUSINESS COMMUNITY
Childhood programs are necessary for a strong future workforce. High-quality early childhood programs help children for school and help them become productive citizens in the future. High-quality early childhood programs are proven to prepare successful students, employees and citizens.

The state legislature is considering a budget that includes a partial restoration of funding for early childhood programs. If the restoration is approved, we will have the opportunity to provide more children in our community with a high-quality early childhood experience, which makes them more likely to be successful students, employees and citizens.

Would you call your legislative leaders to also support this initiative in the second chamber, the changes require the approval of the first chamber. If Congress adjourns before 10 days and the president has not signed the bill, it is still in session, the bill automatically becomes law. If Congress is not in session when the president vetoes a bill, it is a "pocket veto".

Advocacy in Washington?
A political rally with thousands of participants? Or perhaps a professional lobbyist lobbying a senator? A professional lobbyist is communicating with elected officials to help get legislation passed. Advocacy is influencing their actions regarding a specific piece of legislation. It simply means building support for an issue, standard or change in a policy, program or law. It is a lobbying activity.

Example of advocacy:
• Helped a family receive needed services
• Watched a state senator vote on an important issue
• Attended a parent-teacher conference at your local school
• Participated in a city council meeting

Advocacy vs. lobbying
Advocacy may be supporting individuals, public officials, veterans and other social issues. It is the act of helping inform people like you.

ADVOCACY VS. LOBBYING

HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?
1. Legislation is introduced by a senator or representative in his or her chamber and gains a reference number.
2. The bill is then passed on to the relevant committee or committees within which they would use the EPIC approach to tailor their message to lawmakers, practitioners and the business community.
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6. The bill is heard and debated in the chamber and may be put up for a vote.
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ILLINOIS LEGISLATION
• A bill must pass one chamber before being passed onto the next chamber. If a bill is amended (changed) in committee, it must be passed again in both chambers.
• The governor has 10 days to sign a bill. If the governor does not sign a bill, it automatically becomes law. Speaking in person or submitting a letter is a great way to have your voice heard.

Examples of advocacy
• Submitted written testimony to support a bill
• Signed a petition to support a bill
• Made a phone call to your legislative leader

YOU ARE AN ADVOCATE EVERY DAY

ADVOCACY

INTRODUCTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY

FEDERAL LEGISLATION
Bills with similar content are developed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. If there are any changes to a bill in the second chamber, the changes require the approval of the first chamber. If Congress is not in session when the president vetoes a bill, it is a "pocket veto".

• The president can either sign the bill, actively veto it or decide to do neither. If the president signs the bill, it automatically becomes law. Congress may override the president’s veto and sign the bill, or it is a "pocket veto".

ADVOCACY

What comes to mind when you hear the word “advocacy”? A professional lobbyist in Washington? A political rally with thousands of participants? Or perhaps a community member testifying before a congressional committee? These are all examples of advocacy, as are other actions that many of us take every day.

ADVOCACY

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ADVOCACY IN PERSON
Legislators want to be responsive to their constituents and will spend time when possible.

SCHEDULING A VISIT
- Be prepared to suggest and discuss practical solutions. Consider your specific recommendations, what local data can you provide to emphasize how the problem is affecting the community? Why does the issue need to be addressed today?
- Be prepared to defend your perspective and stay focused on rational, balanced conversation will keep the official's attention.
- Anticipate opposing arguments. Be prepared to share observations or opinions.
- Allow the elected official time to ask questions and reflect on your points. Remember that both sides of the issue are equally valid and deserving of their attention.

MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
- Be prepared to discuss the problem in clear and concise terms. Make sure you have all your notes and information ready before entering the meeting.
- Be ready to answer any questions the official may have. Be prepared to share additional information and evidence to support your claims.
- Dress professionally. Make sure your appearance is appropriate for the occasion. The official's first impression can set the tone for the meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING
- Take notes, particularly if further contact is expected. This will help you remember the details of the meeting and what was discussed.
- Write a summary of the meeting, including any action commitments. This will help you keep track of what was agreed upon.
- After making an appointment, leave your name and contact information with the scheduler or aide. Ask if you can be reminded of your visit.
- Find out how much time you will have with the legislator or staffer. Let the scheduler know what issue you want to discuss with the legislator.
- Schedule an appointment with policymakers in advance of your visit.
- If the legislator won't be available during your visit, ask to meet with a staff person familiar about the issue.
- If possible, mark your calendar so you will not forget the meeting.

ADVOCACY TYPES
There are different ways to advocate for early childhood programs and policies: public officials, grassroots advocacy organizations, and media advocacy. Each has its own unique role and can be an effective way to grow public support for early childhood programs and policies.

SPEAKING TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS
- Be sure to clearly define the “ask.” The action requested should be specific and give your audience an idea of what they can expect from you if you offered to provide their office with further information.
- Remember that you are an authority with content expertise, and your words carry weight.
- Testify before relevant legislative committees.
- Invite legislators to visit your program.
- Communicate with legislators and staff through letters, email, phone calls or personal visits.
- Participate in forums where decisions are made.
- Document the problem, its history and whether it has been using both screenings in order to satisfy the policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy.

EXAMPLE:
Mary, the director of a home visiting program, read an article in her local newspaper about a proposed change to the program. She contacted her local legislator to discuss the issue, and the legislator agreed to support her proposal. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy. After more investigation, the agency amended their policy.

EXAMPLE:
Sam, the local director of a home visiting program, is trying to resolve issues with a particular program or policy. He has found out that there are several issues linked to their preferred screening instrument. He and his staff have found that this approach has been ineffective in engaging a child or family, that’s an example of case advocacy. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of issue advocacy. You can use your expertise and influence to address the problem by directly engaging policymakers and stakeholders. Provide reliable information about the impact of these decisions on children and families. Make sure your evidence is compelling and credible. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of case advocacy. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of case advocacy.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY
Adovacates can utilize electoral offices about the impact of current issues. The campaign can use this opportunity to highlight your expertise and influence on the issue. You can also include speaking at bills or requirements meetings and providing expert testimonies. For example, you can use your expertise and influence to address the problem by directly engaging policymakers and stakeholders. Provide reliable information about the impact of these decisions on children and families. Make sure your evidence is compelling and credible. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of case advocacy. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of case advocacy. When you speak up to resolve an issue that is specific and urgent, that’s an example of case advocacy.
LAWMAKERS

As an early childhood professional, you are likely concerned about how decisions made at the local, state, and federal levels affect early childhood programs. This is important because the programs in your community are funded, or influenced, by policies made at the state and federal levels.

Our community has grown tremendously in the past several years, and more parents are seeking early childhood programs for their children. But programs are necessary for a strong future workforce. Early childhood programs are proven to prepare children for school and help them become productive students, employees and citizens.

The following examples show how someone might try to develop advocacy, as are other actions that many of us take every day.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The governor's budget proposal includes a small reduction in the state funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant. If I were to list all the reasons why I think this is extremely problematic, I wouldn't have enough funding to save them all.

The state legislature is considering a budget that includes restoration of the money that's been cut from the Early Childhood Block Grant. This restoration would help put my program back on track and benefit everyone in our community.

WHY ADVOCATE?

• It is important for children to have access to quality programs.
• If the restoration is approved, we may have to make difficult decisions affecting the quality of our program because of cost considerations.

WILL YOU CALL your legislators and ask them to support a budget that includes restoration of funding for early childhood programs?

You may have to work with others to develop your message, which is sometimes called “framing.” When you develop your message, you should:

• Tell them this funding is a priority for you.
• Tell them how they would use the EPIC approach to tailor their message to your legislative leaders.
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You are an advocate if you:

• Impacted a policy-related training session.
• Attended a parent/teacher conference at preschool.
• Participate in a city council meeting.

YOU ARE AN ADVOCATE if you:

ADVOCACY VS. LOBBYING

ADVOCACY involves bringing support to an issue. LOBBYING involves advocating for a position on an issue.

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ILLINOIS LEGISLATION

• A bill must pass one chamber before being passed onto the next chamber. It is a sequential process, starting in the House then the Senate.
• The Illinois General Assembly meets each year on a regular basis. Speaking in person or submitting written testimony is a great way to have your voice heard.
• Organizations will be asked to comment on a bill, such as 20 calendar days before a bill is introduced. If the state executive team or governor does not sign a bill, it is a “pocket veto.”

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

• Bills with similar content are developed in both the House of Representatives and Senate. If the bills are not reconciled by a Committee of Conference, the bills move to the Senate or House floor.
• Bills are then passed by both the House of Representatives and Senate, which are necessary to proceed to a Conference Committee.
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WILL YOU CALL your legislators and ask them to support a budget that includes restoration of funding for early childhood programs?
DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

Many of our key audiences (legislators, legislative aides, agency staff, reporters, business and civic leaders) often have very little time to discuss complex issues. Given these time constraints, it is imperative to develop a succinct message about early childhood issues that will capture the audience’s interest. Advocates must also be capable of communicating a clear and concise message in a number of different formats: letters, emails, speeches and meetings with public officials. Remember to use your personal email and telephone when contacting policymakers.

FOLLOW THE EPIC APPROACH WHEN CREATING YOUR MESSAGE TO POLICYMAKERS:

• ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE
Identify the audience you are trying to influence. Choose information and language being affected can make it seem personal and real.

• STATE THE PROBLEM
Define the problem in a way that is easy for others to understand. The problem should be personalized, specific, timely, urgent and measurable.

• DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE
Legislators want to be responsive to their constituents and will spend time when possible.

SCHEDULING A VISIT
- Make sure to be familiar with the policymaker’s work and goals.
- Check your calendar and schedule an appointment well in advance of your visit.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your work and how it impacts the policymaker’s district.
- Be clear and concise about your message.
- Make the most of your time by being relevant and focused.
- Follow up with a letter or email thanking the legislator for the time they’ve spent and any supportive actions they can take.

MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
- Before the meeting, research the policymaker’s background and interests.
- Be prepared to share your story and explain how the issue affects you.
- Be ready to answer questions about your work and how it impacts the policymaker’s district.
- Follow up with a letter or email thanking the legislator for the time they’ve spent and any supportive actions they can take.

LEAGISLATORS’ STAFF MEMBERS ARE A WONDERFUL RESOURCES. DEVELOPING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH LEGISLATIVE STAFF CAN LEAD TO DIRECT CONTACT WITH A LEGISLATOR OVER TIME.

CASE ADVOCACY
Where you spend your time is based on what’s specific to your community. Follow-up advocacy can be used to keep legislators engaged on a specific issue. Keep the content short and sweet, and frame it in a way that will resonate with the audience and help them understand the issue.

EXAMPLE:
- You can use your local policymaker’s support to help you advocate for a new program or service in your community.
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LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY
Advocates can rewrite official details about the impact of your program to their benefit. This can be done in ways that are specific to your community. Keep the content short and sweet, and frame it in a way that will resonate with the audience and help them understand the issue.

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MEDIA ADVOCACY
The media can help increase public awareness and can be a powerful tool for advocating about early childhood issues.

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CALL TO ACTION
The role of advocates is to represent you and the people you serve. It is important to be clear, concise and to the point.

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ADVOCACY IN PERSON

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SCHEDULING A VISIT
- Make appointments with your legislators in advance.
- Never cancel or reschedule an appointment that you can’t keep.
- Have your agenda ready before you sit down to talk with your legislator.
- Remember that not all appointments are with your legislator, but other relevant staff who may have decision-making authority.
- If you need to cancel your visit, make sure to follow up with your legislator or their staff.
- If the legislator is not available during your visit, ask a colleague or staff member about the urgency of your issue.
- Follow-up: how much time will you have for your issues, and what will you and your staff do while you are there?

MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
- Discuss the issues that you would like to discuss with your legislator.
- Be prepared to discuss public health outcomes and discuss economic feasibility.
- Be sure to emphasize the importance of the problem.
- Be prepared to discuss how your issue will affect their constituents.

CALL TO ACTION
- To reach your audience responsibly, don’t just be heard by your legislator; make sure that you clearly identify the “why.”
- Don’t just let your audience hear what you want to say; make sure that they understand the “why.”

THE EPIC FORMAT

ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE
- Identify the audience they are trying to influence.
- Choose the right communication tool for the job.
- Think about the audience—what problem are you trying to solve?

TELL THE STORY
- Create a compelling narrative of the issue.
- Make the story relevant to the audience.
- Use stories to make your point clear.

SMALL TALK
- Be prepared to discuss public health outcomes and discuss economic feasibility.
- Be sure to emphasize the importance of the problem.
- Be prepared to discuss how your issue will affect their constituents.

STOP AND THINK
- Bring copies of all the paperwork and forms required.
- Fill out the forms completely and submit them on time.
- Allow the elected official time to ask questions and discuss your issue.

STRATEGIES
- File an appeal if services are denied.
- Participate in forums where decisions are made.
- Develop relationships with agency staff to influence policies.

LEGISLATORS’ STAFF MEMBERS ARE A WONDROUS RESOURCE. DEVELOPING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH LEGISLATIVE STAFF CAN LEAD TO DIRECT CONTACT WITH A LEGISLATOR OVER TIME.

CASE ADVOCACY
- When you speak, try to make an issue that is specific to a legislator’s district.
- Be clear and concise.
- Use personal stories to make your point.
- Make sure that your message is clear and concise.
- Remember that you are an authority on the content of your message.
- Be sure to emphasize the importance of your issue.
- Use stories to make your point clear.

AN ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCAT
- You can use case history, control group data, and anecdotal stories to make your point.
- Use data to back up your arguments.
- Use statistics to support your claims.
- Use stories to humanize your issue.

MEDIA ADVOCACY
- The media can help increase public awareness and can create a positive atmosphere about your issue.
- Use the media to spread your message.
- Use the media to reach a wider audience.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY
- Advocates can receive federal and state representatives about early childhood education and care.
- Encourage your legislators to take action.
- Encourage your legislators to vote for legislation.

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ADVOCACY IN PERSON
Legislators want to be responsive to their constituents and will spend time when possible.

SCHEDULING A VISIT
- Contact your legislator’s office to schedule an appointment.
- Some offices will have a form you can fill out online.
- If this is not possible, call the office to discuss your concerns.

ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE
- Identify the audience you are trying to influence. Know what information and language will be effective.

STATE THE PROBLEM
- Make sure to clearly define the “ask.” The action requested should be specific and give your audience an understanding of how the problem affects them personally.

MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
- Dress professionally and be well-groomed.
- Be prepared to summarize and present your case.
- Deadline is tight, be brief and to the point.
- Be prepared to follow up with another phone call or meeting.

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Advocacy in Action

The following examples show how someone might try to develop support for more resources for early childhood programs. This is how they would use the EPIC approach to tailor their message to lawmakers, practitioners, and the business community.

Lawmakers

I am your constituent and the parent of a student in an early learning program in your district. Several families are having trouble enrolling their children because there is not enough funding to serve them. Or you have led to programs turning away children because of limited funding. At the same time, our programs have seen budget cuts that have had a significant impact on the quality of your program.

Would you support a budget that includes a partial restoration of early childhood funding? Would you ask your legislative leaders to also support this initiative?

Business Community

Our community has grown tremendously in the past several years, and more parents are seeking early learning programs for their children. But programs are necessary for a strong future workforce. This restoration would help put your program back on a path of providing quality services to the children who need it the most.

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy involves helping support for an issue by being the general public, members of Congress, and other individuals or groups. As a constituent, you can communicate with elected officials to influence their actions regarding a specific piece of legislation.

Lobbying is communicating with elected officials to influence the creation of legislation. Many organizations can legally lobby, but they are limited in the amount of time and resources they can expend. Lobbying is regulated under Federal laws to ensure that it is not used to influence legislation by misrepresenting the views of the general public.

Illinois Legislation

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Bills with similar content are developed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. These bills can pass through the chamber in which they are introduced, or they can be referred to subcommittees. The subcommittees are responsible for writing the bill. If the subcommittee approves the bill, it moves to the full House and Senate. Differences between the two bills are then reconciled by a Conference Committee. After the conference committee approves the bill, it moves to the full House and Senate. The bills then may be put up for a vote on the full House and Senate.

The president can either sign the bill, allow it to become law without a signature, or veto it. If the president vetoes the bill, Congress can pass it over the veto with a two-thirds vote in both chambers. If Congress does not pass the bill, it is declared void. If Congress does not pass the bill, it is declared void. If Congress does not pass the bill, it is declared void.

1. Legislation is introduced by a senator or representative in his or her chamber and given a reference number.
2. The bill is then referred to the relevant committee or committees within your chamber.
3. The committee holds hearings and assigns the bill to subcommittees if necessary.
4. The committee discusses the bill and debates potential changes.
5. The committee votes on the bill; if passed, it moves to the full chamber.
6. The bill is heard and debated in the full chamber and may be put up for a vote.

Once the bill has been passed in both chambers, it moves to the executive office to be signed into law by the governor or president.

How Does a Bill Become a Law?

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6. The bill is heard and debated in the full chamber and may be put up for a vote.

Once the bill has been passed in both chambers, it moves to the executive office to be signed into law by the governor or president.

Illinois Legislation

1. A bill must pass both chambers before being passed onto the next chamber. If it is amended (changed), it moves back to the chamber in which it was first introduced. If the amended bill is approved by both chambers, it is presented to the governor or president.
2. The governor or president can either sign the bill, allowing it to become law, or veto the bill. If the bill is vetoed, it can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both chambers.
3. If the bill is vetoed, or if the bill is not vetoed and the governor or president does not sign the bill within 10 calendar days, it becomes law. If the bill is not vetoed, it becomes law on its own.
ADOCY IN ACTION

The following examples show how someone might try to develop support for more resources for early childhood programs. This is how they would use the EPIC approach to tailor their message to lawmakers, practitioners and the business community.

LAWMAKERS
I am your constituent and the parent of a child in an early learning program or your child/children attended or are currently attending an early learning program. Our community has grown tremendously in the past several years, and more parents are seeking early childhood programs for their children. But, at the same time, our programs have seen budget cuts that have forced many families to turn away children. This restoration would be a huge benefit to our community and help children from disadvantaged families. That’s why it is so important for you to support a budget that includes restoration of funding for early childhood funding. It would help many children in our community who need the program the most.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PRACTITIONERS
As an early childhood professional, you are likely concerned about ensuring that children have the opportunity to receive high-quality early childhood experiences. As an early childhood professional, you are likely concerned about ensuring that children have the opportunity to receive high-quality early childhood experiences. I am your constituent and the parent of a child in an early learning program in your district that provides early learning program in your district that provides

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The governor’s budget proposal includes a small restoration of early childhood funding. We are a community member testifying before a congressional committee? These are all examples of advocacy, as are other actions that many of us take every day.

ADVOCACY VS. LOBBYING

A bill may pass one chamber before being passed onto the next chamber. It is a serious concern for the state legislature, partially restores some of the childhood programs in our community with a high-quality early childhood services. If the restoration is approved, we know that your support will help provide better learning for the children in our community.

ILLINOIS LEGISLATION

The state legislature is considering a budget that includes a partial restoration of funding for early childhood programs. If we could at least restore this amount, our local programs could begin to serve more children in our community. As a constituent of your publicly elected officials, you share personal stories about how an issue affects you or a family you know. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives. You are advocating when you educate someone about a topic, even if you do not influence the actions of your representatives.