



How to Conduct an Advocacy Visit: Step-by-Step Approach

As members of the **Pediatric Policy Council (PPC)** organizations, your voice is incredibly important for advocating for legislative and policy changes on numerous child health issues. Some of the most important advocacy work you will do will take place during in-person meetings with your elected officials or their staffs, either in Washington, DC or your home district. Below please find a step-by-step guide on how to successfully conduct a lobby visit.

Before Your Visit

Know Basic Logistics

- Understand the basics of getting from your hotel or meeting space to Capitol Hill.
- Understand the basic geography of Capitol Hill (see [map](#)), and how to walk between the House and Senate sides.
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) staff are available to accompany individuals on their first Capitol Hill visits.

Researching Your Audience

- Learn some basic facts prior about your members of Congress prior to your visit, including:
 - Committee assignments
 - Political party and length of service
 - Cosponsorships (has the member sponsored legislation related to child health)
- Much of this information may be found on the professional webpages of your senators and representatives. Links to these pages may be found using the [Senate](#) and [House](#) directories.
- More than likely, you will be meeting with a staff member of your members of Congress rather than your actual representative or senator. Many of these staff members are young. However, these individuals serve as the primary policy advisors for your member and are deeply committed to hearing and relaying the needs of constituents directly to the member. Any opportunity to interact with staff of your members of Congress is time well spent.

Preparing Your Introductions

- Remind yourself of certain details to help begin the conversation positively, including:
 - Your connection with your legislator or state/district
 - Your goals for the meeting, which can help you hone your ask
 - How to clearly communicate your message without using medical jargon or complex language

During Your Visit

Introductions

- Introduce yourself, your institution, and discuss connections to your district/state.
- Describe the Pediatric Policy Council and the nature of your research.
- Explain that you are on Capitol Hill to discuss the importance of prioritizing child health. Be brief and direct.

Tell Your Story

- Describe your research and how it will benefit children.



- Tell a story about the patients you see, explaining how advances in medicine have improved or need to improve pediatric care, and include a story about a research project you worked on that was particularly important for child health.
- When possible, make sure to relate back to your district or state when telling your story. Reinforcing that you are a constituent will strengthen your connection with the office and its staff.

Make Your Asks

- Use PPC one-page fact sheets [LINK] that you can print out and leave behind with the offices of your legislators describing each of the main topics of your asks (i.e. research funding for the NIH, sustaining the pediatric research workforce, etc.).
- Be concise and explain complex concepts as simply as possible. You want both members of Congress and their staff to be able to communicate your asks clearly to others.
- Answer any questions you receive as clearly and concisely as possible. If you do not know the answer to a question during the meeting, inform the individuals you are meeting with that you will follow up after the meeting by email with any additional information.

After Your Visit

- Exchange business cards with staff and send them a thank you email.
- Follow-up by email or phone 3-6 months after your visit.
- If you have received a debriefing form as part of your visit materials, please fill out as soon as possible. If not, please email Ethan Jorgensen-Earp at ejorgensen@aap.org with a summary of who you met with and how the meeting went.
- Maintain relationships with staffers and keep them informed on key pediatric issues.