



Members from Anchorage, Bethel, Copper River Basin, Dillingham,
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TALKING TO YOUR LEGISLATORS CAN BE FUN!

- ✚ Greet your legislators with an open mind and be prepared to explain things to them in basic terms and concepts so they can understand and appreciate what you can teach them.
- ✚ Talk to *each one* of the decision makers from your area – assume that they want to know what you do to help children and families in their constituency. You may be surprised at how receptive they are! This year’s city council member may be next year’s mayor/governor/vice-presidential candidate!
- ✚ When you feel like you’re “preaching to the choir” (telling something they already know and support) thank them and ask how you can help them in carrying out this commitment. (They’re used to people asking for help-not offering it.)
- ✚ When you feel like you’re “talking to a brick wall”, be respectful of their position, and present your information using language and wording that fits with their experiences if possible. An example from my own experience: When meeting with an ultra-conservative legislator one of us used the phrase “working on issues.” You could literally see his eyes glaze over and him thinking “oh no, touchy feely stuff”. It took some fancy footwork to bring his focus back to our message! He’s now one of our strongest supporters! Also, don’t use professional jargon with those who have little or no experience in the CAC world.
- ✚ Provide accurate information, and explain why CACs make a difference for children and families and why they are cost effective. Share honestly your understanding of benefits, and well as any difficulty that may be encountered. They’ll appreciate your honesty and place more value on what you have to say.
- ✚ Take responsibility to learn about your Legislator/Senator/Representative/local politician and their positions – talk to folks who know them, read the paper, call their office to see if they have any strong feelings or concerns regarding the particular topic you plan to cover. Direct your conversation to address those concerns. If we want them to respect our position, we must respect theirs.
- ✚ Go to their website to learn about them. You may find you have something in common, a hobby, birthplace, school, etc.
- ✚ Be there to inform, educate and offer to assist, not to ask for handouts. (That comes later, after they’ve learned to value you, your opinion and your professionalism).
- ✚ MAKE APPOINTMENTS. I don’t know what I thought they were doing, but the first time I went to Juneau I was amazed at how busy they are, and how frantic the pace is. They usually schedule every 15 minutes, so don’t be disappointed if that’s all the time they allot.

RELAX, & ENJOY THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AND SPREAD THE WORD ON AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH YOU FEEL PASSIONATE