



## The Arc Connecticut Families for Families Organizing Tool Kit

### Tips for Meeting with Your Legislator

- However you initiate communication with your legislator, always remember they work for you. You have every right to be in your capitol building speaking with your legislator.
- Be polite. Don't make assumptions about how a legislator feels about an issue based on their party or anything else you may think you know about them. Remember you are there to educate, advocate and hopefully build good working relationships.
- If a legislator has been an advocate and/or voted our way on issues in the past, acknowledge that and thank them right away.
- Be clear but concise. Legislators get distracted easily.
- Legislative offices are located in the Legislative Office Building not in the Capitol. Depending on your legislator, their office could be located in a committee office, in the offices of the Senate Democrats or Republicans or in the offices of the House Democrats or Republicans. Committee offices are located on floors one through four, Senate offices are located on the third floor and House offices are on the fourth floor.
- When you locate their office, ask if your legislator is available. If they are not available their legislative aide might be able to discuss your issues with you. They take notes and report back to the legislator. If no one is available, then you can leave a "walk in" message with your name, where you live, date and time of visit, contact information and reason for the visit. These messages are an important part of the process. Your legislator will know that that you took the time to visit them in Hartford and should take your issue seriously.
- When the House or Senate are in session, there is a different protocol for locating and speaking with your legislator. For the House, you are able to stand outside the House chamber on the second floor of the capitol and "pass a note" to your legislator through legislative staff requesting them to come out and speak with you.
- They usually come out unless there is an important bill being debated. For the Senate, this is not possible. You can however, stand outside their chamber on the third floor and wait for them to exit and call their name.