

**Child Advocacy 101:**  
*Speaking Out for Kids from your  
Community to the Capitol*

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*Vision for Children at Risk*

**Missouri Alliance for  
Children, Youth, &  
Families**

**Child Advocacy Day  
April 6, 2017  
Jefferson City, MO**

# **MO Child Advocacy Day 35th Anniversary April 6, 2017 Jefferson City**

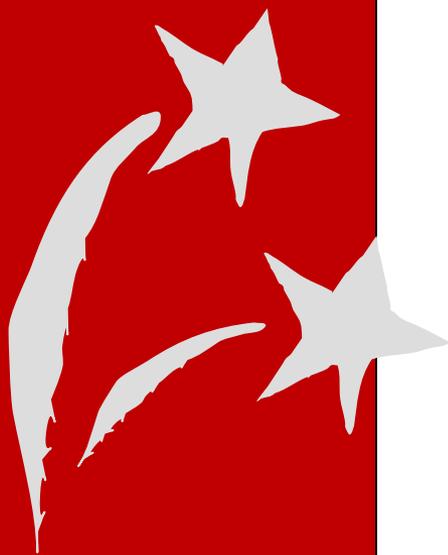


## **What can you expect on April 6?**

- **To learn about legislative issues affecting children & families**
- **Hear from legislative leadership about their policy priorities**
- **Talk to your own state lawmakers**
- **Help make kids Missouri's #1 policy and budget priority**

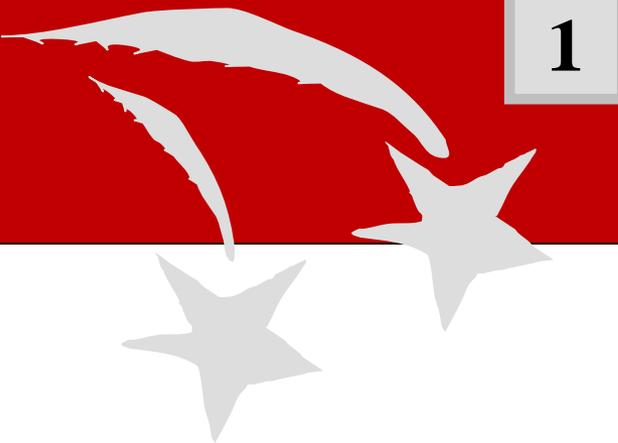


# Advocacy



## Steps for Effective Advocacy

1. **Understand advocacy and why your voice matters**
2. **Be clear about what you want the legislator or decision maker to do or the change you want to happen**
3. **Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players**
4. **Identify your targets**
5. **Develop an advocacy message**
6. **Talk. Write. Email. Tweet. Build relationships**
7. **When you are successful in getting a policy changed, monitor it's implementation.**



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# Understand advocacy and why your voice matters

## What is Advocacy?

**An action directed at changing the policies, position, or programs of any type of institution.**

- Building support for an issue or cause and influencing others to take action.
- Making sure that the necessary financial resources are provided for programs and services in the annual budget.
- Persuading government officials to prioritize services, and advocating for increased revenue.
- Informing the people you work with, your friends, or people in your community and opinion leaders about an issue or problem and mobilizing them to apply pressure to those in the position to take action.

### Top 5 Reasons to Advocate for Children

1. Children cannot vote, and have no voice in the political process. Children need thoughtful adults to speak, act and vote on their behalf.
2. Public programs and policies greatly affect children.
3. You are an expert on the needs of the people you serve, but many other people do not understand children's issues like you do!
4. Policymakers face difficult choices stemming from limited resources. If you do not advocate, other priorities will take precedence.
5. What elected officials do for children depends more on your actions than on their campaign promises or speeches. Legislators need information from you!



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## Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players

**Do you know who represents you?**

Who is your Senator?

Who is your Representative?

**Do your homework and find this information  
BEFORE you go to Child Advocacy Day!**



Find your Legislators:

[http://www.senate.mo.gov/llookup/leg\\_lookup.aspx](http://www.senate.mo.gov/llookup/leg_lookup.aspx)

Understand the  
basic legislative and  
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# Two of the Three Branches of Government

Executive Branch

Legislative Branch  
(General Assembly)



House of Representatives



Senate

# Executive Branch

**Governor Eric Greitens**

**Lieutenant Governor- Mike Parsons**

**State Departments, Boards, and Commissions**

- **Dept. of Social Services:**

- Child care assistance
- Child welfare, foster care
- Medicaid, children's health insurance

- **Dept. of Health & Senior Services:**

- Child care licensing & regulation
- Child & adult care food program
- Background checks

- **Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education:**

- Missouri Preschool Project
- Parents as Teachers

- **Coordinating Board for Early Childhood**

- **MO HealthNet Oversight Committee**

# Legislative Branch

## General Assembly

### House of Representatives

**Speaker of the  
House – *Todd  
Richardson***

**Speaker Pro-Tem**

**Majority Leader**

**Minority Leader**

**Committee Chairs &  
Members**

### Senate

**Lieutenant  
Governor(President)  
– *Mike Parsons***

**President Pro-Tem-  
*Ron Richards***

**Majority Leader**

**Minority Leader**

**Committee Chairs &  
Members**

**You can find the other leaders in the  
House and Senate from these links.**

[www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov) [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov)

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Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players

## The Original Chamber

# How a Bill Becomes a Law

The bill is introduced in the Senate or the House of Representatives

The bill is sent to committee for debate and approval

The bill is sent back to the original chamber

Passage of the bill is debated and voted upon

The bill is sent on to the second chamber

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Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players

## How a Bill Becomes a Law, continued

The Second Chamber

The second chamber passes the bill as-is

OR

The bill is amended and sent back to the first chamber

OR

The bill is amended and sent back to the first chamber

The first chamber approves amendments

The first chamber vetoes amendments and requests a conference committee

Both chambers adopt committee report

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**Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players**

## **How a Bill Becomes a Law, continued**

**The Governor**

**The Governor signs the bill into law OR it becomes law without his signature**

**OR**

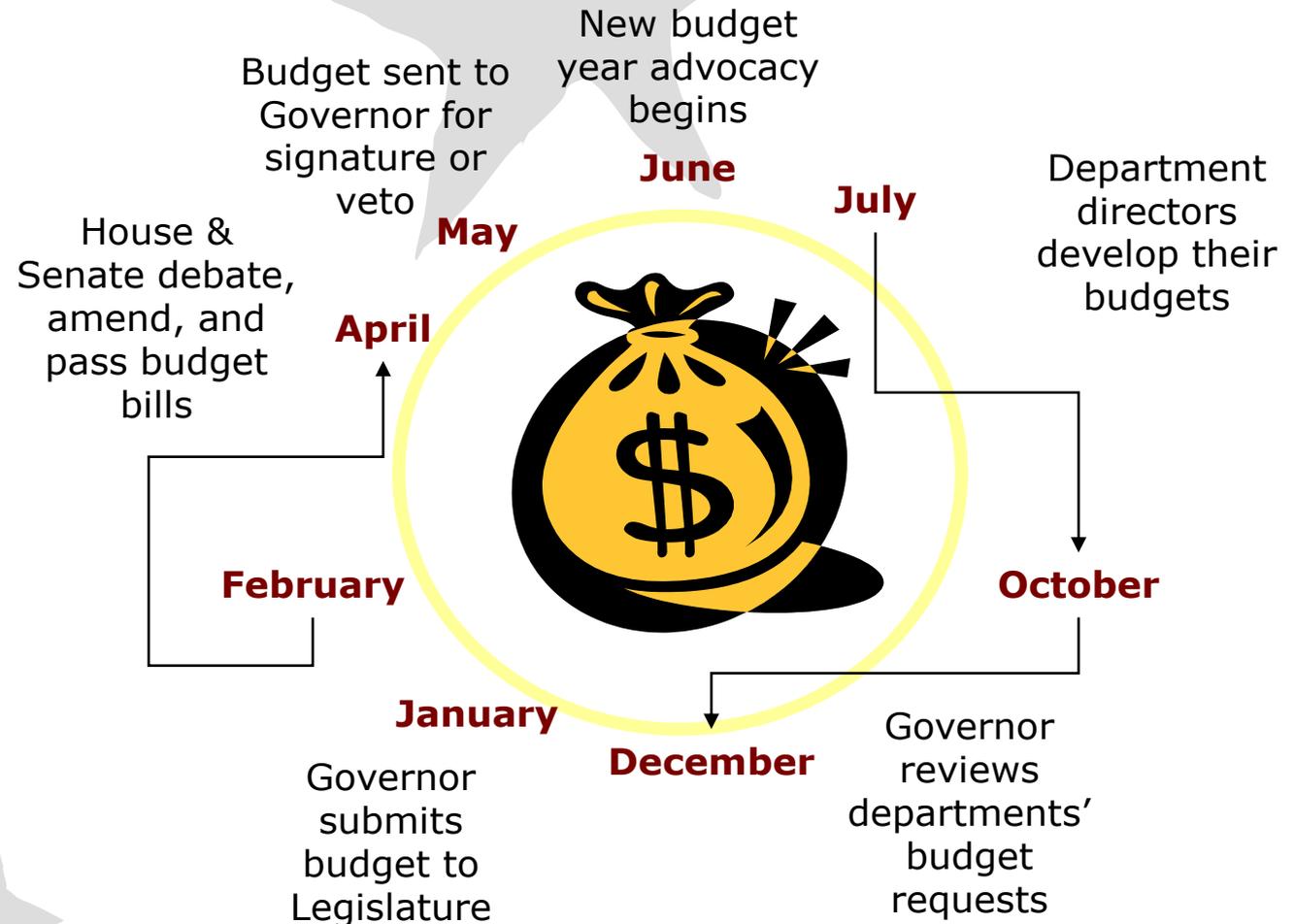
**The Governor vetoes the bill**



**The bill can still become law if a 2/3 majority in each chamber overrides veto**

## Understand the basic legislative and budget processes and the key players

# The Budget Cycle



The Missouri Budget Project has excellent resources to help you understand the budget and the budgeting process. [www.mobudget.org](http://www.mobudget.org)



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## Identify Your Issue

### Problems and Issues

**Problems** are things that are wrong and rarely can be fixed with one action.

**Issues** are specific things that can be done to alleviate problems.

Advocacy is most effective when we advocate for a specific **issue**.

For example, asking our Representative or Senator to vote for better health care for kids and their parents is too vague.

Or asking them to improve early care and education is too vague. Unless we are specific, we cannot know if they are doing what we want them to do.

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## Identify an Issue

# State Funding for Early Childhood Programs

### Sample Advocacy Issue

**Background:** Quality early education is good for working parents and for their children.

**Problem:** Many low-income Missouri families do not have access to quality for their children

**Our issue might be:** Raise reimbursement rates for subsidized care by 10% each year until they 75% of the market rate.



# 5

## Identify and Understand Your Targets

# Understanding Your Target



### Do Some Research

[www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov) and  
[www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov)



#### What is the official's political party?

- Republican or Democrat



#### What is his/her political philosophy?

- socially or fiscally liberal, moderate, or conservative



#### What are the primary influential factors in his/her district?

- Labor, business, faith groups, poverty



#### Why is your issue relevant to your target?

- Have children? Relevant career? What is their self-interest?
- Is he/she on the board of a non-profit, or do they hold a leadership position in a community group?



## 6 Develop an Advocacy Message

### An Effective Advocacy Message:

- ▶ **Informs**
- ▶ **Persuades**
- ▶ **Moves your target to action**

- Uses some facts and figures if possible
- Uses real-life, human examples from your work or personal life
- Appeals to the values of your target
- Overcomes the perceived barriers of your target
- Is simple, concise
- Uses a credible messenger (as a constituent, you are a credible messenger)
- Provides a clear call "ask"

## What is an elevator speech????

*A 2 minute conversation to introduce yourself, tell the elected official what you want him/her to do, make an "ask", and say a thank you.*

You often will not have 10 minutes to speak to an elected official. Or you do not have an opportunity to do a ton of preparation. So you need to have a REALLY clear idea of what you want to say, and to make sure you do not forget your "ask". Of course it is good to schmooze a little, but make sure you make your key points.

- 1. (Introduce yourself)** Hi. I am..... a constituent of yours. I live at ..... and work for .....(if relevant).
- 2. (Tell him/her why you are there)** I am very concerned about .....because.....
- 3. (Make your "ask")**. It is very important that you vote for/include in the budget/oppose..... Will you do that?
- 4. (Say thanks)** Thanks very much for your time.

## 6 Develop an Advocacy Message

# Staying on Message

- Anticipate opposition viewpoints and have counterpoints ready
- Be honest – if you don't know an answer to a question, say you'll follow up
- Don't use jargon or acronyms.
- **Use "off-message" questions to bridge to your point.**
  - The best way to answer that is to look at the broader issue...
  - What's really at issue here...
- Don't repeat negative questions or statements
- Don't argue. Be respectful.

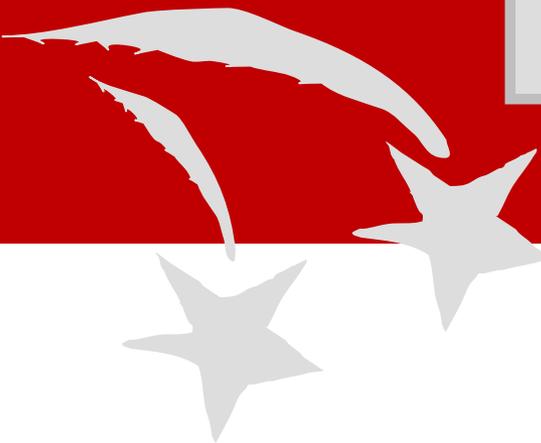
## **10 steps for meeting with elected officials**

- 1. Plan your visit:** What do you want to achieve? Who is the best spokesperson?
- 2. Make an appointment** (for phone and email contact information go to [www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov) and [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov))
- 3. Be prompt, patient, & persistent**
- 4. Practice your elevator speech before your visit**
- 5. Introduce yourself**
- 6. Make your case**
- 7. Be honest & respectful**
- 8. Make the ask**
- 9. Leave a fact sheet with information about your issue (a “take away”)**
- 10. Say thank you and follow up with a note or email**

## Take Action!

### What if my legislator is not in his/her office?

1. Be very polite to the receptionist. Make small talk. Schmooze a bit
2. Tell him/her you are a constituent
3. Ask where your legislator is. *On the floor?* If so, you can go to the door on the third floor and ask the doorman to ask him/her to step outside for a minute. Give the doorman a slip of paper with your name on it. *In a Committee meeting?* If so, it is hard to get them to come out unless they know you well. You probably have to just leave your "take away" literature.
4. Tell the receptionist why you are there. Hand them the "take away".
5. Sign the guest book and ask to be placed on the legislator's mailing list.
6. When you get home, or in the car, send an email saying you were there are sorry you missed him/her. Make your "ask", and request that they let you know if they will do what you are asking.



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**Talk. Write. Email. Tweet.**  
**Build relationships.**



## **Opportunities for Legislative Advocacy**

- **Testify at hearings**
- **In-district meetings**
- **Invite legislators to see programs**
- **Capitol lobby visits**
- **Organize a public rally or an event with a key speaker**
- **Develop region-specific fact sheets**
- **Collect petitions for your cause**
- **Earned media (letters to the editor, commentaries)**
- **Phone calls**
- **Letters/emails/tweets**
- ***Tell Your Story* campaigns**

**At Child Advocacy Day:**

- Visit your state senator. Make your elevator speech and get a commitment.
- Visit your state representative. Make your elevator speech and get a commitment.
- Participate in the Lunch and Learns that provide information about important current issues that affect children and their families

**After Child Advocacy Day:**

- Sign up for advocacy list serves to stay updated on what's going on during the legislative session
- Email and call your legislators as issues affecting children arise during session.



## Get informed and stay informed!

### Join advocacy list serves, such as:

- The Alliance for Childhood Education [www.aceinvests.org](http://www.aceinvests.org)
- Missouri Budget Project at [www.mobudget.org](http://www.mobudget.org)
- The Missouri Children's Leadership Council. Join by contacting [rehresman@visionforchildren.org](mailto:rehresman@visionforchildren.org).

### **National list serves such as:**

- Association for the Education of Young Children at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)
- Children's Defense Fund at [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)