

A Checklist When Advocating with Public Policy Makers

ALWAYS: **prepare** yourself for an appointment; be clear and specific about the purpose of your meeting, introduce yourself and/or your group, and leave materials relevant to the issue.

be **punctual**, and be willing to wait for a person who runs behind schedule.

keep letters and visits **short and to the point**.

be **accurate** and authentic with supporting facts - **document resources**.

be **pleasant** and **polite**.

be **aware** that **issues have two sides**—yours and that of the opposition. Be the first to acknowledge an opposing viewpoint.

support officials with **positive visibility** on behalf of the special needs of gifted children.

ask for a response to **keep communication going**.

follow-up with a thank-you note, phone call, e-mail, an appointment, a letter, etc.

DO NOT: **be disappointed** if you don't accomplish your purpose on the first visit - influence is the result of relationship built over time.

make your issue complicated. Policy makers deal with several important matters simultaneously and will be more attentive if you keep your points short and simple.

ever be **belligerent** or **threatening**. Consider opposing viewpoints, even if you do not share them. Conflict closes communication.

be late for an appointment. Lack of respect for other people's time is rude.

forget other staff members in your thank-you cards. Staff members are the key to direct dialogue with policy makers! And...

DO NOT **quit!** Persistence and perseverance eventually pay off.

Adapted from an article by Gina Ginsberg Riggs, copyright 1984.