

## Advocacy Tips & Resources

YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT MINNESOTA'S YOUNGEST LEARNERS AND THE MINNEMINDS CAMPAIGN BY BEING AN ADVOCATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND WITH YOUR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

### Why should you advocate?

Local advocacy efforts lead to on-going relationships with policymakers. You have the ability to educate local and state policymakers on issues of utmost importance to their constituents and to the future of Minnesota. For MinneMinds, that means making our youngest learners kids a top priority at the Legislature.

Think about why early childhood education is important to you and your community, and find a way to make this issue also resonate with your legislators. Your advocacy, and that of your friends, neighbors and colleagues, will help bring real change.

### How can you help?

Advocating can easily be done through many different channels. Choose the most convenient way for you to reach out:

#### AUTHOR A LETTER TO EDITOR:

Write a letter in response to an article related to early childhood education featured in your local, regional, or even national publications. Letters to the Editor are among the best-read portions of a newspaper. Legislators often read letters featured in their state and district newspapers, making it even more critical that issues facing their youngest constituents are brought to light.

#### CALL YOUR LEGISLATOR:

Pick up the phone and get your message across exactly how you want to say it. Office staff are a good resource, as well.

#### EMAIL YOUR LEGISLATOR:

This is a quick, easy, and to-the-point way to express yourself. Make sure to mention in the subject line that you live in that legislator's district; i.e. "Message from constituent regarding early care and education."

#### SOCIAL MEDIA:

Start a conversation by posting articles or reports and asking questions. Get this issue trending! See the social media guidelines included on [www.MinneMinds.org](http://www.MinneMinds.org) and always try to include #MinneMinds.



#### MEETINGS:

A group meeting with your legislator or other elected officials is a great way to involve the government and the community. Rally your neighbors to all show their support.

#### WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATOR:

Snail mail is still relevant. See below for a sample message, but make sure to personalize before sending to show your knowledge and passion for the subject.





## Sample Message

*Feel free to use this as a basic outline for your written letters or emails, but take the time to make it your own. Conveying a unique message filled with passion will make your letter stand out.*

Thank you for serving our community as an elected official. As a voter in your district, I'm writing to urge you to make our youngest Minnesotans a top priority.

Today, nearly 50 percent of children in Minnesota arrive at kindergarten without the skills they need to be successful in school. Research shows that when kids start behind, they often never catch up and face significant challenges throughout their lives. This staggering statistic puts the future of our kids and our state at risk.

Attendance in high-quality early learning settings is proven to substantially increase the number of children who start school ready to succeed. Yet too many families are not able to access quality early learning opportunities. We can change this unacceptable situation by making a commitment to increase public investment to help families to access programs proven to adequately prepare children for school and to help providers continually improve quality.

When Minnesota's kids have the best start possible and enter school fully prepared, we all benefit. The burden on tax payers is lowered by ensuring classrooms are filled with kids ready to learn. And school ready children are more likely to grow up to be productive in the workplace and have higher earnings, a key to future economic growth.

For the prosperity of the children in our community and the future of our state, please commit to increasing access to quality early care and education for our youngest Minnesotans.

### Who Represents You?

Knowing who represents you is the first step to being an effective advocate. Find their contact information at [www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/](http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/)

You can also call House of Representatives Information at 800-657-3550 or Senate Information at 888-234-1112 to get your legislators' contact information.