



DEC Capitol Hill Day Making Appointments With Your Members of Congress

Meeting with your Member of Congress provides an opportunity to personally convey messages about policy affecting young children with disabilities and their families. Setting up an appointment with a member of Congress may seem daunting, but it's really quite simple. This guide will tell you everything you need to know to set up an appointment.

Identify your Members of Congress: Look up your Member of Congress using Capwiz. Go to <http://capwiz.com/cek/dbq/officials/>. Once you type in your zip code and your elected officials appear, click on their contact information. You want to set up three appointments. You will want to meet with both your Senators' offices and your House of Representatives member's office.

Before You Make Your Appointment: Get a visual feel for the Capitol Complex by going to http://www.aoc.gov/cc/cc_map.cfm. The House and Senate Congressional offices are a fifteen minute walk apart from each other. Please allow enough time in between meetings to make it to your next appointment on time.

Request an Appointment: You may request an appointment in one of three ways: phone, email or fax.

PHONE – When the receptionist answers, explain that you are a constituent, who will be in Washington D.C. on November 17th and that you would like to meet with your Member of Congress and the legislative assistant who works on education issues to talk about policies affecting young children with disabilities and their families. **Be sure to set up a time on November 17th between 11:15 am and 2:15 pm.** If the office you contact says the only time you can have an appointment is earlier that morning – take it! We will make sure you have the information you need! Tell the office how many people will come with you (if you are not attending alone).

- REMEMBER if your Member of Congress is not available to meet with you, don't feel insulted! Congressional staff members have an enormous impact on the public policy process and do much of the legislative work. Having a meeting with a legislator's staff is key to building a relationship with your representative or senator.

EMAIL OR FAX– In a letter to your Member of Congress, indicate that you are a constituent who will be in Washington D.C. on November 17th and that you would like to meet with someone in the office to talk about policies affecting young children with disabilities and their families. **Be sure to set up a time on November 17th between 11:15 am and 2:15 pm.** If the office you contact says the only time you can have an appointment is earlier that morning – take it! We will make sure you have the information you need!

Be persistent—it will pay off!!! You may need to be persistent in following-up with the Congressional office until an actual meeting is confirmed. Again, do not feel insulted! Many Congressional offices are overwhelmed with requests for meetings.

Once you Have Appointments: Email dec@dec-sped.org and let us know who you will be meeting with and the time of your appointment. We'll make sure you have everything you need for a successful visit!