



How to Conduct an Effective Meeting with Members of Congress and/or Their Staff

1. **INTRODUCE** all present.
 - Briefly give your name, where you live, where you work and your job role. Share that you are a constituent and in Washington as part of the Special Education Legislative Summit.
 - If you have a large group of people with you, appoint representatives to discuss each issue.
2. **STATE** the issues.
 - Name the overall issue you wish to discuss, e.g., special education, gifted education, etc.
 - Tell why it is important to you, e.g., what kind of work you do, how the issue impacts children and youth with exceptionalities, and the situation as you see it.
 - Explain why it should be important to that member of Congress, e.g., what impact it has in his/her district.
3. **HIGHLIGHT** specific issues.
 - Detail two or three critical issues as outlined in the Issue Briefs.
 - Make your arguments with personal stories backed by data. This helps put a human face on policies!
 - Provide the leave- behind folder of information.
4. **ASK** for the member's position on the issue.
 - Determine their views.
 - Ask if they can support CEC's legislative recommendations.
5. **THANK** the member/staff person for his/her time.
 - Express hope that this is the beginning of a valuable relationship.
 - Tell them that you would like to continue a dialogue on the issue. Ask if you may write or call on the issue in the future.
6. **PHOTOGRAPH** the experience.

Remember: Congressional schedules are hectic and you may have no more than 30 minutes.

Make it count by being informative and concise!