



# Ohio Children's Alliance

*Leading change for child and family service providers*

## Writing Your Legislator: A Guide

Once you have found your [legislator](#), you can begin writing your letter. Please utilize the following tips in written correspondence. Additionally, please reach out with any questions and check out our [legislative letter template](#).

### ***Top Ten Tips for Effective Legislative Email/Letter Writing:***

- 1. Address your letter.** For example, you would address your letter to a State Official as such:
  - a. The Honorable John Doe  
Ohio Senate  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215
  - b. The Honorable John Doe  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215
- 2. Use Organization Letterhead.** If your organization does not have letterhead, make sure to include your organization's logo on your letter.
- 3. Use the Proper Salutation.** For a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, you would start your letter with: "Dear Representative Doe," For a member of the Ohio Senate, you would start your letter with: "Dear Senator Doe,"
- 4. Introduce yourself and your organization.** Provide information about who you are, the organization you represent, and where you are located in your member's district.
- 5. Focus on Key Points.** Identify your main objective and 2-3 talking points to support it. Each talking point should be 3-4 sentences long. These talking points should be a mixture of facts as well as your own unique perspective. Try to keep your letter to one page, or two at the most. Make sure that if you are criticizing a policy or piece of legislation to remain respectful and productive, and offer alternative ideas if possible.
- 6. Use Relatable Language.** Try to use common terms and language. Most legislators do not understand technical language or industry jargon.

educate | advocate | innovate | connect

7. **Make it Personal.** Explain the potential impact on the district as well as the system as a whole. Talk about how quality and accessibility of care are being affected at your organization. From your perspective, explain why you think it is important to act and why the child welfare or behavioral health system benefits as a whole from your ideas.
8. **Provide a Specific Ask.** Make sure that you not only address what you are advocating for and why, but what action you think the member should take about it. This can include asking the member to champion an issue, draft an amendment or bill, or provide a favorable vote. If you need help preparing an ask, please reach out to us!
9. **End the Letter on a High Note.** Thank the legislator for taking the time to read your correspondence. Offer to answer any further questions they may have and be a resource regarding child welfare or behavioral health issues in the future.
10. **Include Contact Information.** At the end of your letter, include your first and last name, organization name, phone number, and email address.

educate | advocate | innovate | connect