Becoming an advocate for children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents is both rewarding and challenging. But remember, you are already an accomplished advocate. As a parent, teacher, administrator, or paraprofessional, you know how to communicate your point of view effectively. By using these skills, your personal experiences, and other resources—you can become an effective advocate!

1. Develop relationships with members of Congress and their staff
2. Become a resource. Having timely and accurate information is a must!
3. When communicating with an elected official, it is important add personal examples to show the legislation impacts you and the children you work with!
4. Become actively involved in the policymaking process by:
   - Attending hearings
   - Volunteering on a campaign or at a polling station on Election Day
   - Attending political dinners and receptions
   - Attending speaking engagements by legislators
   - Attending town hall meetings
   - Inviting your member of Congress for a site visit
   - Submitting an op-ed to a newspaper
   - Visiting members of Congress and their staff
   - Initiating community action
5. Spread the word! Inform your family and colleagues about your advocacy efforts and encourage them to participate!

Additional Resources

CEC Legislative Action Center: http://capwiz.com/cek/home/
CAN Resources: www.cec.sped.org
Congressional Contact Information: http://capwiz.com/cek/dbq/officials/