

## Tips for Talking with Your Legislator

Keeping in mind that your goal is to develop an on-going personal relationship with your elected representatives, as well as to influence their position on specific issues or bills, here are a few things to remember when speaking to them:

- Know who your legislator is before making initial contact on an issue.
- Find out what legislative committees your legislator serves on.
- Do not be intimidated. Legislators will view you as the expert on the issue.
- Share your personal story if it helps to make your point.
- Do not assume that your legislator understands libraries and the benefits to children and communities. Take the time to educate him/her. Do not use jargon.
- Know your issue. Provide facts and figures to back up your position but remember to frame your comments in ways that reflect your legislator's priorities.
- **Remember all causes are good causes. You must convince your legislator that there is something extra special about yours.**
- Don't debate with a legislator or give ultimatums such as "I won't vote for you if you do not support my position." Respect the legislator's right to disagree with you.
- Be a good listener and hear out what your legislator has to say on the issue.
- Be sure to thank the legislator for taking the time to hear your position.
- Be brief, prepared, clear, honest, accurate, persuasive, timely, persistent and grateful.
- Always follow up with a thank you note, and amplify your main points.
- When your legislator goes the extra mile, you may consider acknowledging his or her efforts by writing a letter-to-the-editor in your local paper.