

# Everyday Advocacy Matters

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## From the Editor

### Advocacy Starts Here

I'm pretty jazzed to be teaching a course this fall that's right up my alley: Issues of Access, Advocacy, and Policy in Youth Services.

First off, my MLIS students at [Dominican University](#) are awesome. I couldn't ask for a more engaged group of emerging professionals with whom I can share great conversations and collegial discussions of issues in both school and public libraries.

Next, we have a great classroom this semester. Why does that thrill me? We can set up the tables boardroom-style, an arrangement that lets us all face each other and helps set the tone for passionate yet respectful discourse on a range of topics affecting youth and families. It makes a huge difference.

The best part about teaching LIS 777, though? I get to talk to MLIS students about advocacy.

During the first session of our advocacy module, I actually lectured. I am not a lecturer. But when I've got something to say, I have no problem stepping up to the podium and doing what comes not so naturally.

Here's what I told my students. Let's call these my Everyday Advocacy Absolutes:

- Advocacy is the heart of Youth Services.
- Advocacy is everyone's job, including—and especially—yours.
- Regardless of your job title, your primary role is advocate.

I also told my students how privileged we all are that we can have these conversations where they should start—in library school at the beginning of their professional careers. (I'm sure it doesn't surprise you to learn I'm a tireless champion of advocacy education in MLIS programs.)

Of course, you don't have to be an MLIS student to embrace these Everyday Advocacy ideas. No matter where you are in your library career, you can start right here, right now. I hope you do!

Get inspired by this issue of Everyday Advocacy Matters and all the great starting points you'll find for your efforts. Remember to check out the [Everyday Advocacy website](#) for more resources and tools to support you every step of the way.

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# Everyday Advocacy Spotlight

## Everyday Advocacy 101: Be Informed

If you're new to Everyday Advocacy or just want a refresher, you're in luck!

The next several issues of Everyday Advocacy Matters will help you dig into the initiative's five tenets—Be Informed, Engage with Your Community, Speak Out, Get Inspired, and Share Your Advocacy Story—by directing you back to the great content on the [Everyday Advocacy website](#).

This issue invites you to dip your toes into the **Be Informed** tenet with this excerpt from [The Everyday Advocate—You!](#) subsection:

Everyday advocates understand the nuts and bolts of internal and external advocacy as well as ways to “seed the ground” so that advocacy is likely to bear fruit. Here are some things to know as you embrace your advocacy role both within your library community and beyond it.

**The Everyday Advocate mindset.** Instead of viewing “advocate” as yet another role you have to take on, consider it the part you were born to play. When you think of advocacy at stage center of everything you do as a children's librarian, the hard part is over. Remember, it all starts with you and the things you're already doing for the youth and families you serve!

**Your advocacy role within your organization.** Do you need the approval of supervisors to contact elected officials, Library Board members, Friends of the Library, or the press? In what situations can you speak on the library's behalf?

**Legal or policy limitations on advocacy activities.** What are the legal limitations on the kind of “lobbying” or “campaigning” you can do on the job as opposed to as a private citizen? What are your organization's internal policies regarding formal lobbying or electioneering?

**The value of creating allies throughout the staff.** Everyday advocates create a positive attitude towards service to children among coworkers on a daily basis. They communicate the goals of children's services as well as the details of upcoming activities and their anticipated impact. Everyday advocates explain why everyone is important in welcoming children and families to the library while welcoming input, assistance, and participation from their coworkers. And best of all, everyday advocates involve the entire staff in celebrating successes!

Check out the other subsections of **Be Informed** using the links below:

- [Types of Advocacy](#)
- [The Power of Stories](#)
- [Use Statistics Effectively](#)
- [News You Can Use!](#)
- [Resources from ALA](#)
- [Resources Outside of Libraries](#)
- [Glossary of Advocacy Terms](#)

## What Does Everyday Advocacy Mean to You

Still a little fuzzy on what Everyday Advocacy is all about? Looking for a way to explain the initiative to colleagues and families? Here's what it means to three ALSC members who've sent us their feedback:

**Alison King**, [Lower Merion \(Pa.\) Library System](#)

“It seems that I meet several people a week who don't know about all the great resources and services their library offers. I get so excited when I get to tell them about e-book lending, financial workshops, children's programming, or whatever else may be going on at the library, even if it's not my library hosting. (We're all in this together, right?)

[Everyday] Advocacy is finding ways to seamlessly incorporate the library into conversation to help solve a problem or fulfill a need for that person.”

**Deirdre McIntyre**, [Licking County \(Ohio\) Library](#)

“[Everyday Advocacy] means working each day to show libraries are worth the public's time and investment.”

**Kim Popoenuck**, [Sonoma County \(Calif.\) Library](#)

“Everyday Advocacy to me means showing children and adults the amazing resources we have in the library for learning to read, learning about the world, developing a passion for reading, and finding the answers to their questions—in homework or in real life.

Advocacy to me also means helping parents become advocates for their children, helping teenagers become advocates for society, and empowering adults to improve their lives by accessing free information through books, magazines, newspapers, movies and computers. Libraries provide all people with an opportunity to cultivate life-long learning.

Libraries are often hubs in their communities, and this helps children, parents, seniors, tutors, families—everyone—find connections to the things they love.”

## **From the ALSC Advocacy Committees**

Check out these recent [ALSC blog posts](#) and committee chair updates for the latest from Priority Group I:

### **Advocacy and Legislation**

**Robyn Lupa, Co-Chairperson**

**Matthew J. McLain, Co-Chairperson**

[Appreciating the Value of the Library](#)

### **Early Childhood Programs and Services**

**Brooke E. Newberry, Chairperson**

[Encouraging Families to Play Outside](#)

### **Intellectual Freedom**

**Chelsea Schmitz Couillard-Smith, Co-Chairperson**

**Laura M. Jenkins, Co-Chairperson**

[Considering Access and Library Spaces](#)

### **Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers**

**Lesley Mason, Chairperson**

[Partnering: Early Literacy and Early Intervention](#)

### **Public Awareness**

**Amy Koester, Chairperson**

[Every Card Has a Story...](#)

**School-Age Programs and Services**  
**Amber Lea Creger, Chairperson**

[Summer Reading > Numbers](#)

## News You Can Use

### Media Mentorship & AAP's New Digital Media Guidelines

Have you heard the awesome news? Recent findings from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) regarding young children's use of screen time fully support ALSC's position as outlined in [Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth](#), the white paper adopted by the ALSC Board of Directors in March 2015.

ALSC President Andrew Medlar's October 9 [blog post](#) captures our collective enthusiasm for these findings and enumerates the many ways our division supports members in their emerging roles as media mentors.

Explore the AAP's [key findings](#) from their recent Growing Up Digital: Media Research Symposium. Why not use these findings as starting points for new elevator speeches that demonstrate the value of media mentorship in libraries?

Thank you for sharing in our Everyday Advocacy excitement about this victory for all libraries and librarians serving young children and families!

### ALSC Communications and Messaging Survey

Have you taken the [2015 ALSC Communication and Messaging Survey](#)? Don't miss your chance to share your opinions about the division's print and electronic communication platforms, including the Everyday Advocacy Matters e-newsletter.

The survey consists of 28 questions and should take about 15 minutes to complete. Survey results will help ALSC measure the impact of its communications and messaging on our members and inform future communications decision-making.

**The survey will close on Friday, October 23, 2015, so don't wait. Take the survey today!**

### Fight for School Libraries!

The fight for school libraries needs you and all the other Everyday Advocates out there!

A replacement for No Child Left Behind, the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#) is up for reauthorization, and it can't be done without your help.

We need all stakeholders—ALSC members, non-members, teachers, community leaders, and policy makers alike—to support the vital roles of school libraries and school librarians in helping students prepare for success both in school and in life.

Just 60 seconds is all it takes to send a letter, make a phone call, or tweet your support to your elected officials. You'll find the instructions for how to do all these things on the [ALA Legislative Action Center website](#).

Consider this opportunity kindled. Now it's up to you to turn those sparks into a flame! Spread the word and encourage everyone you know how they can make an impact for the youth and families we serve.

**You can do this.** We all can, and we all should. Take action today!

## **National Library Legislative Day 2016**

From May 2-3, 2016, Everyday Advocates from around the country will gather in Washington, DC, to talk libraries and library-related issues with national legislators. Start making plans now to join in on this high-impact, high-energy event that makes a difference for youth and families.

Ask your supervisor, library administrator, or principal about attending [National Library Legislative Day](#) (NLLD) in 2016. Make your case to be there by stating how federal legislation needs your support through the stories you can tell about your school or public library and the community you serve.

Don't wait! Budgets for 2016 are being prepared and finalized now. Be sure your NLLD attendance gets included! Registration for NLLD 16 begins in December.

## **Get Inspired!**

### **Babies Need Words Every Day Media Kit**

Everyday Advocates, rejoice!

As a way to connect with community partners about Babies Need Words Every Day, ALSC has created a customizable media kit, which includes a project overview, talking points, press templates, and project information that will inform local groups and media outlets. (Find the media kit at the bottom of the Babies Need Words Every Day web page.)

The project talking points are especially relevant to your Everyday Advocacy efforts—they're practically ready-made elevator speeches perfect for sharing when the opportunity presents itself!

And don't forget the Babies Need Words Every Day booklist brochure and free, customizable posters available on the ALSC website to complement your advocacy messages.

### **Get Away @ your library<sup>®</sup> with Teen Read Week 2015**

Wait, isn't Teen Read Week (TRW) a YALSA thing? You bet it is! It's also a great time to connect with your colleagues serving teens to find out how they're inspiring young adults to become readers and lifelong library users.

This year's celebration, Get Away @ your library<sup>®</sup>, encourages libraries to help teens escape from the day to day grind of school, homework, family responsibilities, part time jobs and so on by picking up something to read. Why not check out a few ideas to adapt in your work with the younger set? (Maybe there's even a joint programming opportunity in your future.)

Everyday Advocacy is all about getting out there and trying new things, so catch the TRW 15 spirit from October 18-24.

## Everyday Advocacy Challenge

On Tuesday, September 1, a cohort of 18 intrepid volunteers kicked off the inaugural [Everyday Advocacy Challenge](#) (EAC) by agreeing to do the following:

- Commit to completing eight consecutive [Take Action Tuesday challenges](#) on a back-to-school theme;
- Collaborate with their EAC cohort members over the eight-week period, sharing successes and troubleshooting issues via e-mail and online documents;
- Write posts for the ALSC blog about their EAC experiences; and
- Nominate colleagues to participate in the next EAC.

Read the inspiring blog posts from our participants, who've tackled the weekly challenges head-on and demonstrated that Everyday Advocacy can be both easy and fun! Here are quick links to participants' reflections on the EAC's first five weeks:

- [Everyday Advocacy Challenge: Week 1 Reflections](#)
- [Everyday Advocacy Challenge: Week 2 Reflections](#)
- [Everyday Advocacy Challenge: Week 3 Reflections](#)
- [Everyday Advocacy Challenge: Week 4 Reflections](#)
- [Everyday Advocacy Challenge: Week 5 Reflections](#)

The inaugural EAC wraps up on Tuesday, October 20, so be sure to watch the ALSC blog for reflections on the remaining three weeks.

## Awesome Elevator Speeches

Ready to write an [elevator speech](#) using value-based language? Looking for some inspiration? Here are three examples from participants in the inaugural [Everyday Advocacy Challenge](#):

"I help teachers find the resources they need to improve their teaching, such as research materials for a project, the perfect story to illustrate a literary concept, or a fun read-aloud for a rainy day."

"I help children develop early learning skills at the library so that they can enter school ready to read and cultivate a desire for lifelong learning."

"I help kids get excited about learning at the library so that they will become educated and engaged citizens."

Find more resources for writing elevator speeches, including a helpful [infographic](#), on the Everyday Advocacy website.

## Calendar

- **October 18-24**—[Teen Read Week](#)
- **October 18-24**—[National Friends of Libraries Week](#)
- **November**—[Picture Book Month](#)
- **November 15**—[International Games Day](#)

# Resources

**Take Action**—[View the most recent Take Action Tuesday challenge](#)

**From the ALSC Blog**—[Media Mentorship & AAP's New Digital Media Guidelines](#)

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