

TOP 10 ADVOCACY TIPS FOR FCA STUDENT CLUBS

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“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” - Anne Frank

LEARNING ABOUT ADVOCACY in an FCA CLUB Understanding and getting engaged in advocacy is the cornerstone of what *Future Child Advocates* do! The following list is intended to provide some concrete tips to get you started as advocates. For example, you will learn how advocates often differentiate between “case” and “cause,” meaning between standing up for an individual or group versus standing up to promote a specific issue or broader principle. However, this is just the beginning of what you will learn as you delve into the subject of advocacy. Use the attached **Advocacy Checklist** from the **Community Tool Box** (<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>) as a resource to determine what else you need to learn about advocacy to get your FCA club off the ground!

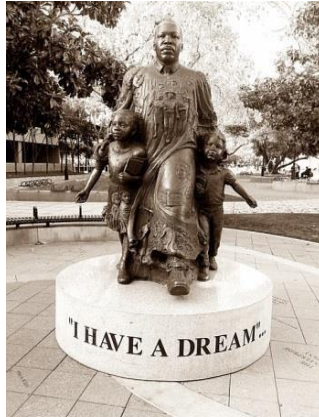


1. What IS advocacy? What is advocacy NOT?

Advocacy is representing, defending or championing the rights of others. Advocacy is also the act or process of publicly supporting a cause, whether through policy, proposal, petition or other forum. Contrary to popular belief, advocacy does not necessarily equal lobbying, although lobbying is considered one form of advocacy. Instead, advocacy might involve mobilizing, representing, negotiating, bargaining, demonstrating, organizing, litigating, civil disobedience...or simply just taking a public stance. Advocacy is *not* providing a direct service, to one or more individuals, to meet an immediate need. Rather, it is standing up for one or more individuals or their broader cause for the purpose of changing their social situation or conditions, or protecting or promoting their rights. Advocacy also does *not* amount to simply arguing or opposing something, and does not even have to involve confrontation or conflict. Advocacy is the active promotion of a principle or cause, and it involves a recommendation for a solution. It means working *for* something rather than, or at least in addition to, fighting *against* it. Are you an “Advocacy Genius” already? Take this short **Quiz** (10 questions) and see how much you already know! <https://www.thecampaignworkshop.com/advocacy-genius-quiz>. Then check out the two attached **Advocacy Videos** with your team and engage in conversation about the basics of advocacy utilizing the discussion questions provided. Afterwards, you can check out the websites of the two organizations that created these videos to access even more resources!

2. Looking to Human Rights Activists for Inspiration

We have many champions of social justice and revolutionary movements to turn to for inspiration! From Dolores Huerta to Martin Luther King Jr., from worker's rights to civil rights, we need not look far to find examples of change agents. There are many children's rights activists who have come before us as well. For example, Jane Addams, a pioneer of children's right in the U.S., who once said *"The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life."* We can also look to present day children's advocates like Marian Wright Edelman and Malala Yousafzai. Who inspires you to take action and advocate?



3. Case-Based Advocacy

The most important aspect of standing up for the rights of one, or several, involves giving those you are standing up for a voice. Ideally, that means supporting the right of others to speak for themselves and promoting their access to the channels of power. Alternatively, that can mean speaking on behalf of those who are not able to speak for themselves or who tend not be heard. In that case, it's useful to frame your arguments within a human rights perspective. When doing child advocacy you can further translate your message into a children's rights perspective. Check out the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx> Be sure to also humanize your subject by sharing stories about their individual struggles (with permission of course).

4. Cause-Based Advocacy

Standing up in support of a particular cause, or policy that will advance a cause, involves moving beyond change that might just benefit ourselves, our loved ones, or those we work for. It means pushing for change that improves the lives of many, including people we will never know. Depending on the focus, some refer to this as either "issue advocacy" or "systems advocacy." Case-based advocacy, as mentioned above, is also a useful tool for informing advocacy for a broader cause. Learn more about your own advocacy strengths and what type of social advocacy might best serve your current interests here: <http://voices.mckinseysociety.com/what-kind-of-social-advocate-are-you/>



7. Develop Your Message

Advocating for a specific cause or marginalized population of people means creating an informed message that is both fact-based and inspirational. You should develop an “elevator pitch” (very short message), as well as a longer more detailed message. Ideally your message will carry with it an obvious passion for your cause. You’ll also want to connect to your target on both an intellectual and emotional level, as well as tailor the message to the specific interests of the target themselves. To begin with, you should learn as much as possible about your issue, the opposition, and the general climate you will be approaching, as a starting point for developing your message. You’ll want to elucidate the values underlying both your position and your opponent’s position. You’ll need to support your message with data and concrete examples, and you should use that data to dispel any common myths. Avoid making absolute or universal claims as there are exceptions to every rule and you do not want to discredit yourself. Use visuals whenever you can, as people respond to different learning methodologies. The stories of specific individuals who are impacted carry a great deal of power as well, because they can touch your target on an emotional level. Be careful to choose individuals and stories that won’t reinforce prejudices against an otherwise marginalized population. Your message should end by asking your listener what you would like them to do after they hear your message. Remember that advocacy cannot just be about fighting *against* something, but must involve advocating *for* something.



8. Know Your Terminology

In creating your message, you may want to use terminology that is specific to the population or cause you represent. However, this depends on your audience. Some will not understand terms that are specific to a particular field or issue, because they are not already familiar, as you are. How you define your issue and the language you use to do so are also essential. Words and phrases have connotations, and these connotations send messages you may or may not wish to send to those you seek to influence. Regardless of what you decide is best for your particular audience; there is some general advocacy jargon that you should be familiar with to begin your journey. See the attached **Advocacy Glossary**.



9. YOU Can Do Advocacy, Too!

Advocacy is practiced across many professions and disciplines. We tend to think of advocacy as a very formal activity, and generally we think first of attorneys who advocate for individuals or groups through the practice of law. Or maybe we think of those in public policy who advocate for specific legislation. However, being an advocate is something that anyone can do! Advocacy can also take place in any forum. Traditionally we think of advocacy as taking place in a courtroom or maybe a legislative hearing, but you can be an advocate anywhere and anytime! Advocacy doesn't have to wait for the right time and place, though this may become part of your strategy.



10. Resources

There are countless resources available to you as an advocate. To get you started, search the **Community Tool Box** (<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>), which is a free online resource for all who are advocating for social change in any arena. Utilizing this site will provide you with an abundance of tools, right at your fingertips! Professional journals are also wonderful sources of research that can serve you well. Some of them you may want to consider include: *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *Child Maltreatment*, *The International Journal on Children's Rights* and *Children's Legal Rights Journal*. There are also many national and international children's advocacy organizations in the field that you can turn to for resources and expertise. Check out the attached list of **Advocacy Organizations** to get started!

