



CHADD

Advocacy Manual

A toolkit for CHADD members
and ADHD advocates





**Children and Adults with
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**

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Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) is making this advocacy manual available as a resource for those wishing to engage in advocacy; however, CHADD is not directing readers to carry out any specific policy agenda. Further, readers of this advocacy manual should not attribute to CHADD any advocacy in which they engage and should not state that they are speaking on behalf of CHADD.



Children and Adults with ADHD

Dear ADHD Community Advocate:

At no point in history have we understood so much about ADHD and how to treat it as we do today. Since the founding of CHADD in 1987, the United States has realized great gains in research about ADHD, the legal rights for people who live with the disorder, and a better public understanding of the lives of the people it affects.

Despite these gains, misconceptions about ADHD persist. They can discourage individuals and caregivers from seeking help or using effective treatments that have undergone rigorous scientific scrutiny.

You can help CHADD and the ADHD community address these issues when they come up in local media or in your local or state government policies. As you work with members of the media and policymakers, you can provide them with the basic information about ADHD. You can share with them how to help families like yours.

This manual offers you some basic tools for advocating in your community and reaching out to your representatives in government. Using your personal experience with ADHD and as a member of your community, you can bring a voice and a face to the issues that affect all of us.

Best regards,

The CHADD Public Policy Committee

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Section One

Advocating for the ADHD Community



ADVOCATING FOR THE ADHD COMMUNITY

When you first consider talking to a policymaker, it's not unusual to feel a bit anxious and nervous. You may think, "Why would this person listen to me?"

But you are the person policymakers most need to hear from—a real person who can describe how a policy, an ordinance, or a law actually affects you and your community. If you or a family member has ADHD, you are exactly the right expert to inform the policymaking process about the potential impact on those with ADHD. You have firsthand information on what is really needed and how current law really works (or does not) for you. As a resident and a voter in your community, you are a credible advocate for people affected by ADHD.

It is important to remember that when you speak with a media outlet you must know the limitations of what to say or write. For information requiring a very involved or scientific answer, for example, you may want to refer questions to CHADD's resident science expert, communications department, or public policy committee.

“ Advocacy is speaking about the reality of life—yours, your child's, or your family member's. It is educating the policymakers in your communities—education, local and municipal, state, and federal—to make decisions that are good and fair.

Why be an advocate for the ADHD community?

This advocacy manual can give you the tools to advocate more effectively. You carry your single most powerful tool with you—your personal story. Nothing is as effective as the person who can communicate and give a face to an issue. You can expect that a policymaker does not know much about your issue and what is important to you and your family. Unless your issue comes to their attention and captures their personal interest, your issue is just one of many. And, unless a policymaker has the personal experience—gets to know someone with ADHD, meets children or adults with ADHD, or has a family member or a friend with ADHD, or another disability or disorder—the world of disability issues is more difficult to understand.

Your job as an advocate is to give those issues a face—to make it personal. To do this, sharing your personal story is vital. Once your issues have the attention of a policymaker, school board member, trustee, council member, or a member of the media, you have a much better chance of leveraging your personal experience as a catalyst for action and change.

Joining forces with others in the disability community

Anytime you can join forces with others who have shared concerns, you increase your chance of effectiveness. There are times where organizations differ in their viewpoints. However, there are also many places where organizations

can agree and work together. Your work together will be more powerful because of the strength in numbers.

As an individual, you may want to join a CHADD affiliate to work with other members. If you are an affiliate coordinator, you may want to reach out to other community organizations whose members could be affected by a proposed or enacted policy or piece of legislation. In contacting another organization, you will want to discuss how to coordinate your efforts to present policymakers with an effective argument on why change is needed.

What are your concerns about becoming an advocate?

I don't know enough about the issues.

This is a matter of education. CHADD can provide you with information about the public policy landscape and the policy positions we support. Visit the Advocacy section of the CHADD website at www.chadd.org/policy-positions. You can also contact the public policy committee's staff liaison at (301) 306-7070 ext. 123 or email PublicPolicyLiaison@CHADD.org.

I don't know how local government, school boards, or the state legislature operates.

We'll help you learn about how they work. You can also familiarize yourself with them by visiting the websites of your local government—the village board, city council, town or municipality. You can also find information about the key government agencies and offices in your state or territory at www.usa.gov/states-and-territories.

I don't know who to partner with about my concerns.

Think about other people and organizations who are affected by your issues and what state group might represent them. CHADD frequently works with other groups such as:

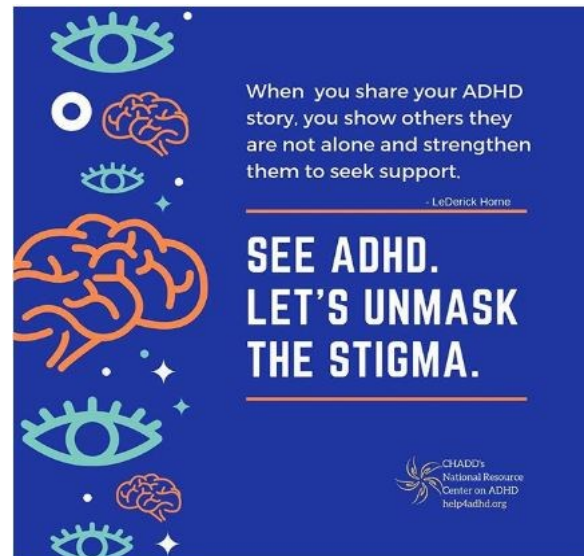
- [Mental Health America](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net) (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net>)
- [NAMI](https://www.nami.org/) (<https://www.nami.org/>)
- [National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health](https://www.ffcmh.org) (<https://www.ffcmh.org>)
- [Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation—BP Kids](http://www.bpkids.org) (<http://www.bpkids.org>)
- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists](https://www.aacap.org) (<https://www.aacap.org>)
- [American Academy of Pediatricians](https://www.aap.org) (<https://www.aap.org>)
- [National Medical Association](https://www.nmanet.org) (<https://www.nmanet.org>)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](https://www.nasponline.org) (<https://www.nasponline.org>)
- [Parent Teachers Association](https://www.pta.org) (<https://www.pta.org>)
- [American School Counselor Association](https://www.schoolcounselor.org) (<https://www.schoolcounselor.org>)

Many organizations have local or state affiliates. We can help you identify experts or partners who might want to join with you in your efforts. We also encourage you to sign up for the email lists of organizations that are potentially aligned with CHADD's goals to learn more about their activities.

I'm just one voice.

One voice can make a difference. Only you can tell your story.

I don't have needed skills.



This manual will provide the basics you need to get started as an advocate. As you continue and gain more practice, it will become easier and you will develop your skills as an advocate. You have value in being a resource on ADHD issues to policymakers.

It's too expensive for me.

You can do a good job of advocating without spending a lot. If you can invest your time, you can do a great deal of good with a small budget.

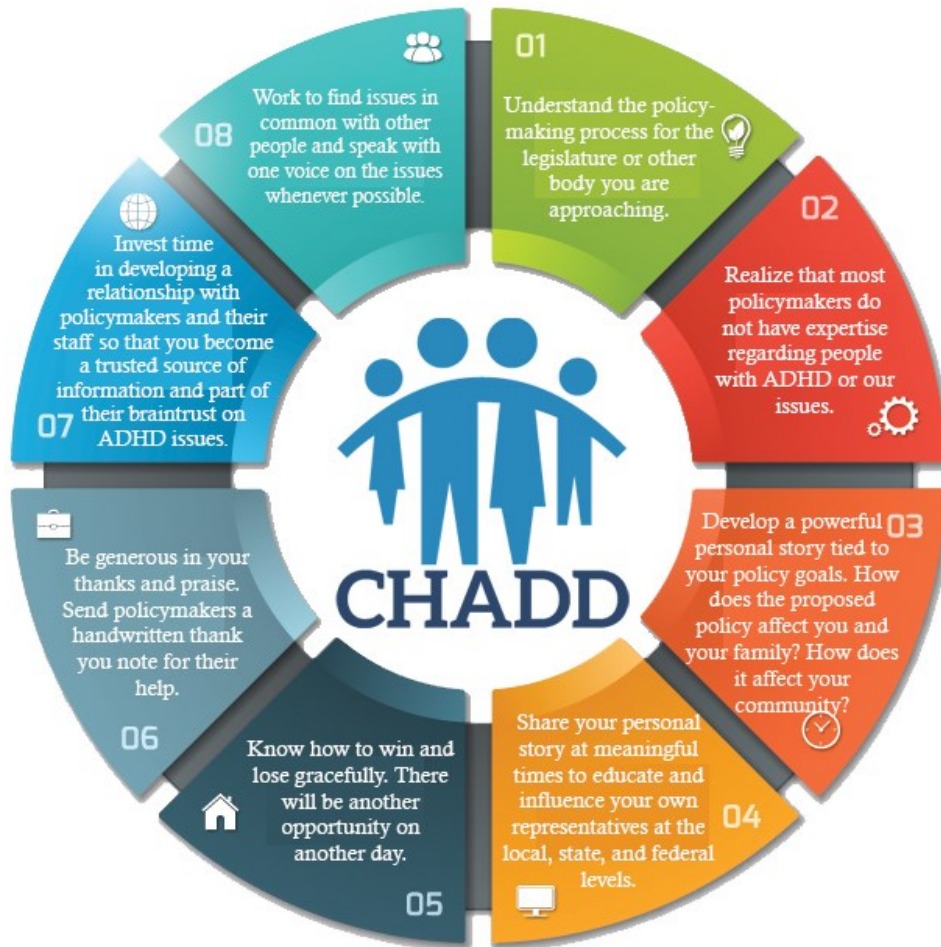
Remember—you are the expert! That is the basis for this manual—to give you the tools to advocate for the causes important to you.

**“ Nothing is as effective as the person
who can communicate and give a
face to an issue.**



Steps for Success

How well you advocate is largely determined by how well you communicate your issues or positions to policymakers. There are many ways to share your message, and there is no one best method to achieve your goals. Several key approaches can help you improve your advocacy efforts. These basic steps often produce the most favorable advocacy results.



People with disabilities and their interests differ widely, but there are times when you can work together. It may be the need for funding for more and better services at school or in the community, or any number of other issues. Take the time to find out what you have in common with the other advocates. Collective action is not an all-or-nothing issue. Collaboration gets results. Do not let the areas where you disagree prevent cooperation on other issues.



Fast Facts on CHADD & ADHD

What is CHADD and who funds the organization?

- CHADD is [Children and Adults with ADHD](http://www.chadd.org). The website is www.chadd.org. Founded in 1987, CHADD is the nation's largest family-based organization serving people affected by ADHD.
- CHADD receives support from a wide range of funders, including a recurring cooperative agreement with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, corporate charitable giving, membership fees, earned revenue, as well as generous donations from people like you. Information about CHADD's funding can be found at www.chadd.org/donations and checking under the heading Our Funding Partners. Questions about funding can also be answered by calling CHADD at 800-233-4050 and speaking with the chief operating officer.

What is ADHD and is it limited to childhood?

- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is recognized by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Medical Association (AMA) as a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting children and adults.
- ADHD is characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.
- Many of the symptoms classified as ADHD symptoms are actually symptoms of executive function impairments. Executive function refers to a wide range of central control processes in the brain that activate, integrate, and manage other brain functions.
- The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) lists three presentations of ADHD—predominantly inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive and combined.
- While ADHD was originally thought to be a childhood disorder, it is a lifespan disorder that can persist into adulthood. Symptoms continue into adulthood for more than three-quarters of people diagnosed.
- ADHD affects about 10 percent of school-age children and about 5 percent of adults.

What is the best form of treatment?

- Treating ADHD often requires medical, educational, behavioral, and psychological intervention. This comprehensive approach to treatment is sometimes called multimodal and, depending on the age of the individual with ADHD, may include:
 - ◊ parent training
 - ◊ medication
 - ◊ skills training
 - ◊ counseling
 - ◊ behavioral therapy
 - ◊ educational supports
 - ◊ education about ADHD

Is ADHD overdiagnosed in children?

- While there may be pockets of above-average diagnosis rates, in other cases ADHD is underdiagnosed and undertreated. Studies show that access to diagnosis and treatment of mental illness varies depending on gender, race, and socioeconomic status.
- Studies show girls are three times less likely to receive service for ADHD than boys.
- Minority children are two- to two-and-a-half times less likely to receive treatment and support services for ADHD compared to white children.

What should people do if they suspect they have ADHD or if they think their child has the disorder?

It is important to be evaluated by a medical professional and treated as early as possible. Effective treatment includes behavioral management, educational accommodations, parent and child training, individual and/or family counseling, and medication.

What happens if people go untreated for ADHD?

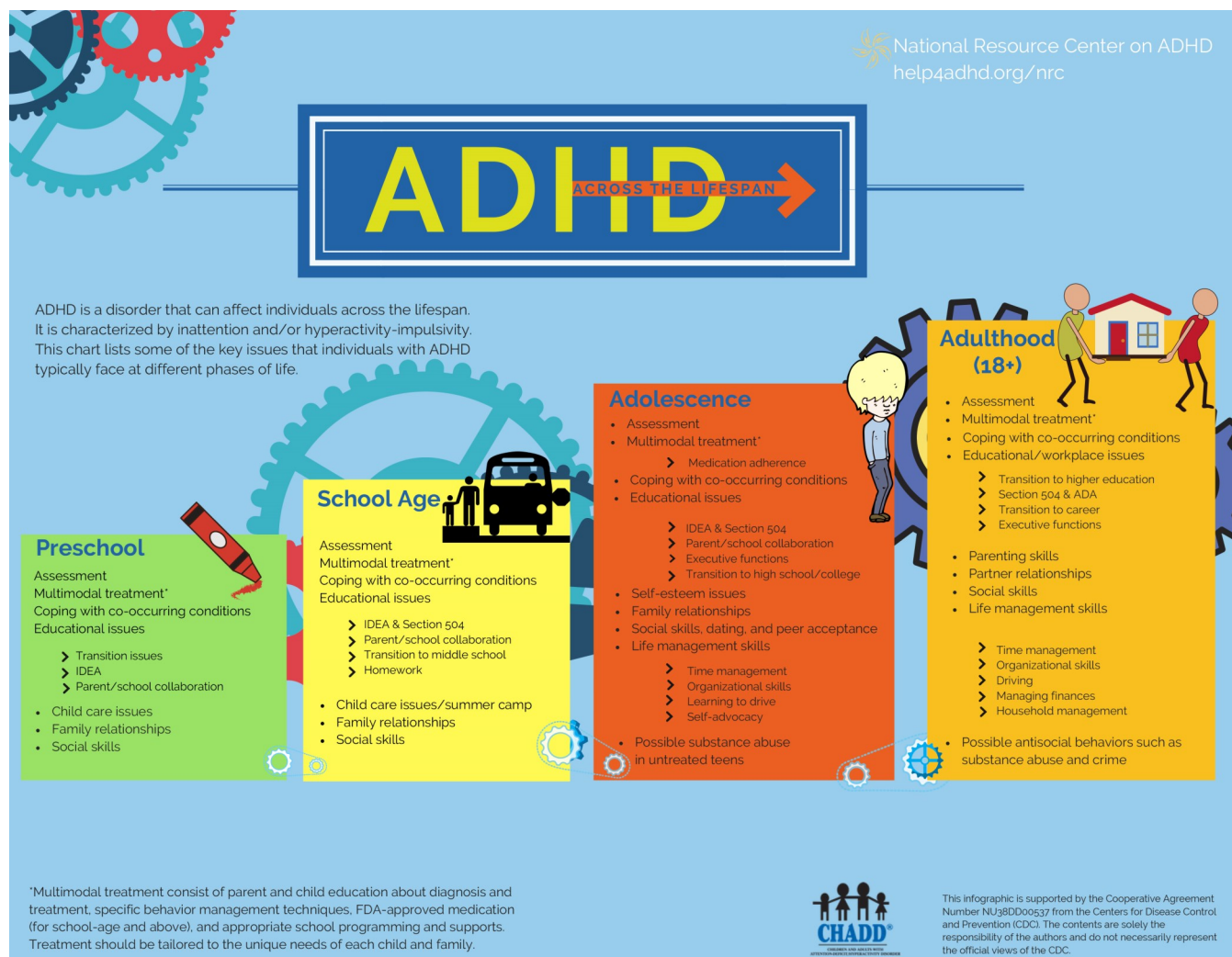
Undiagnosed and untreated ADHD can have devastating consequences. This can include low self-esteem, a higher prevalence for sexually transmitted diseases, greater risk for automobile accidents, social and academic challenges, career underachievement and a possible increase in the risk of later antisocial and criminal behavior. It can even shorten how long a person could expect to live.

Are school officials advocating that parents medicate their children with ADHD?

- Federal law prohibits school officials from requiring that parents include medication in their child's treatment plan as a condition for attending school.
- While only medical professionals can diagnose ADHD, teachers and other school personnel are vital sources of information for parents about behavior and learning in the classroom that could indicate a child needs to be evaluated for ADHD or other disorders.

What can reporters, policymakers, and members of the public do to help?

It is important that reporters, policymakers, and members of the public learn as much as they can about ADHD. You can help by encouraging them to visit the CHADD website at www.chadd.org. You can refer members of the media who need more information to the CHADD communications department (301-306-7070, ext. 102) or the public policy committee liaison (ext. 123).



People-First Language

People-first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully with and about individuals with disabilities. People-first language emphasizes the person first, not the disability, by starting the phrase with the words “person who” or “person with.” People-first language describes what the person has, not what the person is.

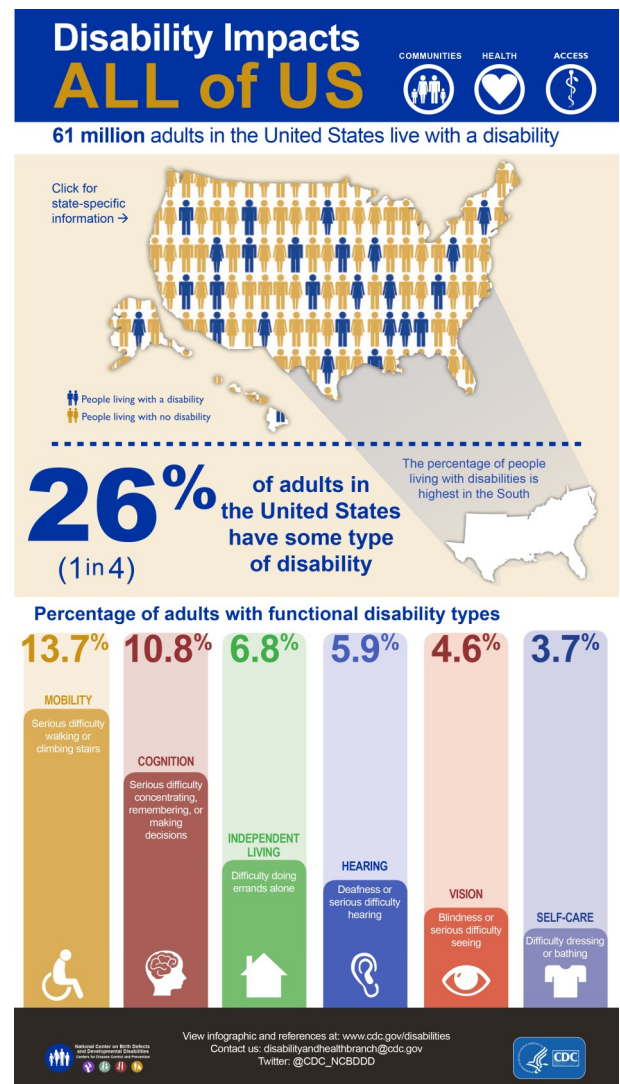
Preferred language:

- People with disabilities.
- My sister has ADHD.
- My father has a visual impairment.
- My child has autism.

Don't say or write “suffers from,” “is afflicted with,” or “is the victim of” a disability.



People-first language describes
what the person has,
not what the person is.



Communicating With and About People with Disabilities



About 50 million Americans report having a disability. Most Americans will experience a disability some time during the course of their lives. Disabilities can affect people in different ways, even when one person has the same type of disability as another person. Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.

People First Language

People first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully about an individual with a disability. People first language emphasizes the person first not the disability. For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: “a person who ...”, “a person with ...” or, “person who has...”

Here are suggestions on how to communicate with and about people with disabilities.



For more information about disability and health, visit www.cdc.gov/disabilities

People First Language	Language to Avoid
Person with a disability	The disabled, handicapped
Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Retarded, slow, simple, moronic, defective or retarded, afflicted, special person
Person with an emotional or behavioral disability, person with a mental health or a psychiatric disability	Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts
Person who is hard of hearing	Hearing impaired, suffers a hearing loss
Person who is deaf	Deaf and dumb, mute
Person who is blind/visually impaired	The blind
Person who has a communication disorder, is unable to speak, or uses a device to speak	Mute, dumb
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic
Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by MS
Person with cerebral palsy	CP victim
Accessible parking or bathrooms	Handicapped parking or bathroom
Person of short stature	Midget
Person with Down syndrome	Mongoloid
Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability, is courageous

How A Bill Becomes A Law

How State and Local Municipal Laws Are Made

State and local governments follow a similar procedure when proposing, debating, and passing a new law or amending—updating—an existing law. Each of the 50 states will follow this outline, with some state-specific variations. Counties, parishes, towns, and villages may follow a similar process.

Citizen input is an important part of the legislative process. Public opinion often affects the shape of a bill as well as its eventual success or failure. Remember, your input can play a crucial role in determining how a bill becomes a law.

At any step in the process, participation by a citizen or group of citizens is as easy as making a call, writing a letter, or signing a petition to your senator, your representative, your trustee or council member, state governor, county executive, town supervisor, or village mayor. We encourage you to communicate as early in the process as possible to have the best opportunity to influence the decision-making.

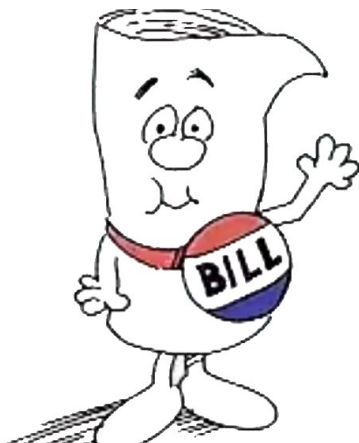
How Federal Laws Are Made

The US Congress is the legislative branch of the federal government and makes laws for the nation. Congress has two legislative bodies or chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Anyone elected to either body can propose a new law. A proposal for a new law is called a bill. House and Senate leadership in the majority party play a key role in determining which bills are considered in the House and Senate.

Steps in making a law

1. A bill can be introduced in either chamber of Congress by a senator or representative who sponsors it.
2. Once a bill is introduced, it is assigned to a committee (or committees) whose members will consider, debate, and make changes to the bill.
3. If voted out of committee, the bill may be scheduled for that chamber to vote on.
4. If the bill passes one body of Congress, it is then presented to the other body to go through a similar committee, amendment, and voting process. Alternatively, the other chamber may move its own version of the legislation.
5. If the two chambers pass different versions of a bill, they must work out any differences between the two versions. Both chambers must pass the same exact bill and, if so, they present it to the President.
6. The President then considers the bill. The President can approve the bill and sign it into law or not approve (veto) a bill.
7. If the President vetoes a bill, in most cases, Congress can vote to override that veto and the bill becomes a law.

Adapted from USA.gov



HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

1 EVERY LAW STARTS WITH AN IDEA



That idea can come from anyone, even you! Contact your elected officials to share your idea. If they want to try to make it a law, they will write a bill.

2 THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

A bill can start in either house of Congress when it's introduced by its primary sponsor, a Senator or a Representative. In the House of Representatives, bills are placed in a wooden box called "the hopper."



Here, the bill is assigned a legislative number before the Speaker of the House sends it to a committee.

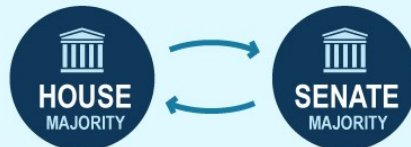
3 THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

Representatives or Senators meet in a small group to research, talk about, and make changes to the bill. They vote to accept or reject the bill and its changes before sending it to:

the House or Senate floor for debate or to a subcommittee for further research.

4 CONGRESS DEBATES AND VOTES

Members of the House or Senate can now debate the bill and propose changes or amendments before voting. If the majority vote for and pass the bill, it moves to the other house to go through a similar process of committees, debate, and voting. Both houses have to agree on the same version of the final bill before it goes to the President.



DID YOU KNOW?

The House uses an electronic voting system while the Senate typically votes by voice, saying "yay" or "nay."

5 PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

When the bill reaches the President, he or she can:

✓ APPROVE and PASS

The President signs and approves the bill. The bill is law.



The President can also:

Veto

The President rejects the bill and returns it to Congress with the reasons for the veto. Congress can override the veto with 2/3 vote of those present in both the House and the Senate and the bill will become law.

Choose no action

The President can decide to do nothing. If Congress is in session, after 10 days of no answer from the President, the bill then automatically becomes law.

Pocket veto

If Congress adjourns (goes out of session) within the 10 day period after giving the President the bill, the President can choose not to sign it and the bill will not become law.

Brought to you by





Section Two

Advocating to Policymakers on ADHD Issues

Your advocacy efforts on behalf of adults, children, and families affected by ADHD can help shape public policy in your community, state, and nation. This is important work! It may also be outside your comfort zone. You may feel nervous that you'll do or say the wrong thing when meeting with a policymaker or elected official. This is normal for someone who has just started advocating for others. With practice, you will build confidence when you speak out. Keep in mind that your policymakers probably have the same goal you do—making your community a better place for everyone.



Meeting with your policymakers face-to-face is the most effective way to share your message. Schedule meetings with them when the legislative body is not in session and outside of regular meetings. Ask to meet with your representatives in their district or local offices, or when they have office hours at the village, town, or city hall. Trying to get their time just before or just after a public meeting is difficult and not the best way to bring them information. Make an appointment and bring your information with you.

If the representative isn't available, ask to meet with the relevant staff member. Get to know this person and work to build a good relationship. Invite this staff member to come to your meetings to learn more about your ADHD issue. Staff members are key to developing the representative as an ally. They are required to be knowledgeable about many different issues and the community they serve. Lawmakers at all levels rely on the opinions of their professional staff.

Letters, phone calls, and emails are also good ways to contact your elected officials—especially if made at the right time, with a sincere and heartfelt message. Be polite and open, and thank the policymaker for his or her time on your issue. Positive words go a long way toward helping you reach your advocacy goals.

Tips for better advocacy efforts

Understand the historical context of the issue.

- Research the treatment of people with ADHD and related disabilities. How have popular myths or misperceptions shaped public policy? How can you correct those myths and misperceptions in a positive way?
- Become knowledgeable about the current policy framework and its strengths and inadequacies.
- Use this understanding of the historical context to explain the nature and scope of needed changes to current policy.

Understand the political context of the issue.

- Determine the extent to which the policy is partisan or nonpartisan.
- Understand how a proposed policy may be related to a current societal issue. How have the needs of people with ADHD been caught up in addressing this issue?
- Identify the key players and the role of the policymaker you are trying to influence.
- Determine the nature and extent of the controversy raised by a particular issue.
- Determine the existence/strength of any coalitions. Can you work together or side by side?
- Determine the strength of the opposing position. Learn and understand your opponents' arguments. This will allow you to build a more persuasive argument and perhaps find a common ground from which to work.



**Positive words go a long way
toward helping you reach your
advocacy goals.**



Articulate the values, principles, and goals of the policy.

- Recognize the goals of the policy being considered or discussed. How do these goals fit with the needs of the members of the ADHD community?

Understand the needs of the policymakers and the importance of building long-term relationships with member of their community.

- Time—balancing priorities
- Trust—importance of developing long-term relationships
- Solutions—provide data and other supports justifying policy options that fix a problem
- Political—know whether your policy position has opposition
- Re-election—are they planning to remain in office

Understand the needs and duties of the policymaker's staff members.

- Help in sorting through an avalanche of input to determine which requires immediate action or consideration.
- Help to develop and present fiscal and program estimates.
- Help in identifying the key stakeholders and generating support for your position.
- Help in developing viable policy options, drafting bills, report language, floor statements, and/or speeches.
- Help in developing a political strategy.

Create a strategic plan.

- Identify the change you want (short and long-term goals and objectives).
- Decide on the overall strategy and then determine how a particular tactic or a meeting with a policymaker fits in.
- Identify the key policymakers whose leadership roles are related to your ADHD issue.
- Guide the conversation—frame the issue to gather broad-based support and to create a sense of accomplishment.
- Present viable policy options based on research and program and fiscal estimates.

Understand the power of personal stories that are tied to your goals.

- Understand your policy objective and how you are framing the issue. Then share your own personal story or seek others that fit within the framing of the issue.
- Relate your personal story, or the stories of others, to the issue under consideration and talk about how the proposed policy will affect you and others based on what you've shared.

Understand that who delivers the message can be as important as the message itself.

- Strategically select the spokespeople that will have maximum influence over policymakers—this should ideally be a constituent.
- Ensure that your message is presented in a manner that recognizes the needs of the policymaker and others they will have to convince in the policymaking process.

Recognize your strengths and limitations.

- Learn about proposed policy options and understand how they will affect the ADHD community and your issue before agreeing or disagreeing with the options.
- Engage with staff and policymakers to understand their motivations for supporting, remaining neutral, or opposing policy options.
- Only agree to options that affect you and your issues. Don't agree to a policy option on behalf of others that you don't represent.

(Adapted from information prepared by the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy. Washington, DC)



Effective Advocacy Quick Tips

Do:

Do believe your voice matters.

You vote and you live in the district. Your concerns have much more weight than you think.

Do contact the Public Policy Liaison at:

(301) 306-7070 ext. 123

or by email:

publicpolicyliaison@chadd.org

Do know your facts.

Use ADHD Fact Sheets from CHADD's National Resource Center at

<https://chadd.org/understanding-adhd/adhd-fact-sheets>. Visit the Public Policy page, <https://chadd.org/policy-positions>.

Do say, "I don't know."

When you don't have the answer you can always get back to the policymaker with the correct information.

Do offer alternative language or ideas.

Be constructive. Give your policymaker some alternatives.

Do say you are a CHADD member.

This is a statement of fact that tells the policymaker you are concerned about ADHD without making your comments official CHADD policy.

Do vote and participate in the election campaign process.

This is the right and responsibility of every citizen.

Do track and report any CHADD expenses incurred while lobbying for any federal, state, or local legislation.

This is an IRS requirement and an absolute must. This information goes to the national office with your quarterly financial report.

Don't:

Don't ever think policymakers are uninterested in your input.

You have something important to add to the conversation. Your policymakers and elected representatives need to hear from you.

Don't go unprepared to a meeting.

Policymakers expect you to be prepared and to the point. You want to know the issue, have facts and be able to tell them what needs to be changed.

Don't just voice opinions.

Everyone will have an opinion on all sides of an issue. If your arguments are supported by facts and figures, you will have far more influence.

Don't try to answer questions when you are unsure of the answers.

You'll get caught every time. Just make sure you respond with the information requested.

Don't just complain.

You will be much more effective if you have an alternative proposal.

Don't say you represent CHADD.

While this may appear to be a small distinction, it is an important one. We do not want you to be limited to only CHADD official policy.

CHADD chapters may not participate in *any* election campaign.

Do not invite candidates to any chapter activities and do not lend chapter support to any candidate. This is a violation of CHADD's nonprofit status.

Don't forget to report CHADD expenses for "lobbying."

This includes mileage, food, printing, mailing, phone calls, etc. If you don't track and report CHADD expenses, CHADD could lose its nonprofit status.

Effective Advocacy Quick Tips

Do:

Do advocate for access to all medications and treatments for ADHD.

You will appear to be advocating for all people with ADHD. Learn about medications at Treatment of ADHD at

<https://chadd.org/about-adhd/treatment-of-adhd>.

Do follow up after a meeting.

Always follow up with a thank you letter with an offer to be a resource and any additional information.

Don't:

Don't advocate for coverage of a specific medication or brand name.

You will appear to be lobbying for the interest of a pharmaceutical company.

Don't assume your work is done.

Follow up to see what action has been taken and how you can be helpful. Request another appointment to continue the conversation.



Believe your voice matters. Your concerns have much more weight than you think.





Section Three

Your Advocacy Message



How do you go about crafting your message for maximum effectiveness? It is important to understand the elements of building a powerful message. Use the accompanying worksheet to jot down your answers to the questions below.

Set your message framework

What is it you want the policymaker to do?

Summarize what you want done in just one sentence. Be as concrete and specific as possible. This is the point you will return to in crafting and presenting your message.

How do you want the policymaker to do it?

Be clear and specific about what you think the appropriate course of action includes. This should follow your summary statement from above.

When do you want the policymaker to do it?

Policymakers and staff think in terms of their schedule. Describe the timeframe in which action is necessary.

How does this issue relate to you?

What effect has this issue had on your life and on the life of your family? How does it affect other people with ADHD? Remember the point of telling your story is to put a face on the issue and to help the policymaker understand the impact of the issue on your life or that of your family member.

Are others affected by this issue? If so, how many people in the policymaker's area?

Numbers always help. If 10,000 other children in your state are also affected, this will have a big impact on elected officials. Visit CHADD's website at [ADHD Data and Statistics](https://chadd.org/about-adhd/adhd-data-and-statistics) at <https://chadd.org/about-adhd/adhd-data-and-statistics> for up-to-date numbers on ADHD and co-occurring conditions.

List the key points the policymaker must know to understand the issue and how it affects people with ADHD.

Try to limit your key points to no more than three on any issue. It's easiest for both you and the policymaker to remember three points.

Why should the policymaker be concerned about this issue?

Consider:

- This is an area of personal interest or the interest of a friend to the policymaker.
- A large number of residents in the representative's area are affected.
- The policymaker serves on a committee, caucus, or other body that considers this issue.
- The policymaker has the opportunity to distinguish himself or herself as a leader on the issue.

Share your message

Now that you have the framework, how do you present your message? Here is a template for sharing your message in letters, email, phone calls, or during a visit.

Introduce yourself and thank the policymaker for his or her time.

Explain who you are, including whether you are a CHADD member, and how you are connected to this policymaker, such as whether you are a resident of the area or a constituent. Always thank the policymaker up front for his or her willingness to engage with you to help set a positive tone for the meeting or the written communication.

Identify the issue you will discuss.

Keep it simple. Tell the policymaker the overarching issue you are bringing to his or her attention.

Share your story, or your family's story, and how the issue affects you.

Keep it short and specific. If you are describing programs you or your family are involved in, use the full names of the programs. Say how those programs benefit you.

Describe what you want the agency or policymakers to do.

A brief, one-sentence request is best.

Allow time for the policymaker to ask questions (if this is a meeting or phone call).

The policymaker may have questions about your personal experience, the issue you have raised, or about how other policy proposals may affect individuals with ADHD. Take time to educate and engage the policymaker or staff.

Keep the meeting or the communication brief and leave information for the policymaker to review later.

Offer to be available as a resource or connect the policymaker with someone who is willing to be a resource. Be sure to leave a summary of the information you shared with the policymaker along with your contact information.





WORKSHEET: YOUR ADVOCACY MESSAGE

**Follow this worksheet to help you build the elements
your advocacy message.**

Who are you and what is your connection to the policymaker?

How does this issue relate to you?

How does, or will, this issue affect the services and supports that you
and/or your family need or receive?

Are other people affected by this issue?

If so, in what way? How many people?

Why is this issue important to the policymaker
and/or to his/her constituents?

List the three key points you want the policymaker to understand or know about this issue and its impact.

Describe what action or position you want the policymaker to take (and when).

What other suggestions do you have for how the policymaker could accomplish your request?

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching upwards towards the center, creating a sense of unity and aspiration. The hands are positioned around the central text, with some at the top, some on the sides, and some at the bottom. The overall tone is light and positive.

Section Four

Developing a Relationship with Policymakers

Learn More About Your Policymakers

Establishing a personal relationship with your elected officials and other policymakers is just as important as understanding the policymaking process. This includes policymakers in local governments, such as villages, towns, and cities, as well as on school boards. Knowing basic information about your elected officials and policymakers can enable you to better speak to their interests and personal or professional experiences.

When you first start out, take some time to learn about the policymakers you want to educate about ADHD issues or ask for help in changing policies that affect people with ADHD. Ask questions such as:



- What political parties do elected officials belong to? Where are they situated within those parties, such as in leadership positions?
- What type of personal background do the policymakers come from and what professional experiences have they had?
- Does the elected official or policymaker have any personal experience with ADHD? With disabilities? With children's health issues?
- What kind of areas do policymakers represent? Where do they come from—rural, urban, or suburban areas?
- What are the key industries and employers in the policymaker's area and what issues are they facing?
- What appear to be the elected official or policymaker's top policy priorities?
- How could addressing your issue help advance the goals of the elected official or policymaker?

Answering these questions can provide suggestions about where policymakers may stand on your issue. These answers also can help you find opportunities to open a dialogue with policymakers about your issue or to provide more information about how ADHD affects people in their communities.

Get to know your local policymakers

One of the keys to becoming an effective advocate is fostering an ongoing relationship with policymakers that creates an open line of communication. It is important for policymakers to know they can contact you for comments on an issue just as you contact them to express your point of view.

If you have never had the opportunity to meet your local, state, or federal representatives, set up times to meet with them when they are in the community. Most state and federal policymakers have local offices where you can meet with them. Learn about your policymaker before the meeting. Find out about their interests and concerns by reading their websites and sign up for their newsletters or other communications. Review local media reports about their work in the community.

If you feel up to it, examine the elected official's or policymaker's voting record on issues similar to yours. Voting records are public information. Often the representative's website will list how she or he voted on bills or ordinances. You can also check with the legislative body's website or with the village or town clerk's office.

There are other opportunities to meet your policymakers:

- Attend a town hall meeting or roundtable discussion. After the discussion, you can briefly introduce yourself as a constituent. Ask if you can follow up later with more information you'd like to discuss.
- Attend public official functions where you can be seen and express your interest on the policymaker's work.

- Invite the policymaker to your CHADD affiliate meeting to meet with your members and learn more about ADHD. This should be an informational meeting, not presented as a chance to campaign. The invitation from CHADD should be sent to the policymaker's government office, not a campaign office.

These informal meetings can lead to opportunities to discuss issues that could affect your family and members of the ADHD community.

Your policymaker's staff

Although only elected officials cast legislative votes, never underestimate the importance of their staff members. Most of your contacts will be with staff members rather than the policymakers. Develop and cultivate a good rapport with staff members, and let them know what issues are of interest to you. It has been said that the invisible force in lawmaking is the staff, including personal, committee and/or leadership staff. Long after elected officials leave office, many of the same staff members remain working for other members of the same legislative body.

Be responsive and share reliable information with them, and you will be viewed as a trusted resource. Getting to know the staff members is a key part of becoming an effective advocate.



Guidelines you should consider when working with a policymaker's staff include:

- **Remember who the staff members are.**
Staff members are key figures in developing policy that can affect your community. Learn their names and a little bit about them. Start your conversations by mentioning an area of their interest. A shared interest in a favorite sports team or hobby can help to open doors.
- **Do not underestimate their influence.**
Policymakers trust their staff members, depend on them, and act on their suggestions. Make a good impression, provide credible information, and maintain a good relationship. You'll be remembered well and staff members will take an interest in your concern.
- **Be considerate of staff members and their workspace.**
Remember office space is limited and staff members are busy during their workdays. Most office buildings have public lobby areas or coffee shops where you can wait before it's time to meet. Finally, do not expect to socialize with or be entertained by staff members for extended periods of time.
- **Do not overestimate what the staffer may know.**
Staff members often require outside assistance to learn more about a topic or issue. The information you can provide to them is helpful. The staff member you're speaking with may cover many different issues. It's always okay to ask, "Would it be helpful if I gave you a quick refresher of the issue?"
- **Be honest.**
Provide accurate, complete information to maintain your credibility.
- **Say "I don't know" when appropriate.**
When asked a question that you are not sure about, let the policymaker or staff member know that you don't have the answer immediately, but will follow up with the answer. Then it is essential to follow up. [CHADD \(www.chadd.org\)](http://www.chadd.org) can help you get answers to respond to many questions about ADHD.

- **Provide succinct, useful information.**

Be concise, brief, and to the point. Have a folder with additional information ready to give them at the end of the meeting. More information can always be requested by staff members should they need further clarification.

- **Seek the staff member's opinion but never attack her or his ideas.**

Be prepared to offer alternative ideas or proposals for consideration.

Preparing to meet with a policymaker



Being prepared when you meet with your policymaker or members of the policymaker's staff can be the difference between succeeding in your goal and being dismissed without what you came for. Suggested steps in preparing to meet with policymakers include:

- **Know what you want to say and ask of the policymaker.**

Identify the problem to be addressed and have recommended solutions. If you believe a statute, ordinance, or policy should be changed, know it by number. If possible, offer draft language that would make the change you desire. If you are working toward a school district rule or policy changes, know which agency and which rules or policies you are targeting. Structure possible compromise positions in advance. Be willing to listen to and understand opposing views before arguing against them.

- **Prepare written materials about your issue to leave with the policymaker or staff member with whom you're meeting.**

These items should be concise and neatly printed, not handwritten. Have a folder of information ready for key staff members if they express a desire for more details about your issue. Your goal should be to gain their interest and then to communicate your ideas cogently and as succinctly as possible. Ask if they would like additional information emailed to them. Three possible ways of presenting your information:

- ◇ Include background information and statistical data along with your recommendations or proposals.
- ◇ Include a summary of your findings and recommendations in enough detail to explain your rationale. Highlight the most important points as bullets at the top of the document. If appropriate, illustrate your ideas with pictures or graphs that can convey your information at a glance. Remember, staff members have limited time and are often bombarded with an overwhelming amount of printed materials.
- ◇ List your recommendations or your most important points. In general, when communicating with policymakers, it is best to illustrate your ideas in simple terms using actual examples from the policymaker's geographic area if possible. Remember, they are most frequently concerned with the impact your proposals would have on "real people."

- **Learn about any opposition to your proposal from other policymakers and prepare counterarguments.**

You can severely damage your credibility by announcing that there is no opposition when you know there is. Try not to be emotional about the opposition. Clearly articulate your counterpoints and identify whether there is room for compromise.

- **If putting your proposal in place is going to cost money, be prepared to propose ways to fund it.**

Would you advocate for a new fee or new taxes? Are you proposing to divert funds from another program? If so, which one and why? Know who would oppose your proposed funding sources.

- **If you believe your proposal will be cost-effective or even save money, be prepared to explain how this will happen.**

- **Understand the extent and nature of the issues policymaker must address, and analyze how your request fits into this larger scope.**
- **Be patient and maintain a positive attitude.**
Be polite and courteous, even when you're disappointed or angry. Don't ruin your chances for a good relationship with policymakers or staff members. Abusive, critical, or insulting approaches toward the people you hope to influence favorably regarding your cause will have the opposite effect.
- **Express appreciation for elected official's efforts and an understanding of their limitations.**
Say thank you for their time and work, even if you don't get exactly what you requested.
- **Unless you have frequent contact with a policymaker, don't expect him or her to remember your name.**
As you greet the elected official or policymaker, remind him or her of your name and mention the last time you were able to speak together. Remind the policymaker of your issue.
- **Don't threaten or try to bargain with any policymaker by promising to deliver or withhold blocks of votes.**
This approach is not well received among elected officials and does not work. Besides, it is extremely difficult to follow through on such a bargain. You will lose the respect of the policymaker and possibly end the relationship you're building.
- **The support of officials who have endorsed your issues previously should never be taken for granted.**
People and groups who have an opposing point of view will likely be providing policymakers with information, too. It's a good idea to maintain contact with policymakers and to offer information as needed or requested in a timely manner. You might not need to spend a lot of time advocating with policymakers who routinely support your cause, but staying in touch keeps your information in front of them.
- **Simply because a policymaker's voting record indicates his or her prior opposition to a cause similar to yours, never assume the policymaker will refuse to support your concern.**
The policymaker may be responsive to your specific ideas. At least give the policymaker an opportunity to hear from you on the strengths of your position. Be prepared to respond to the concerns you know the policymaker has raised before regarding similar or related issues.
- **During your initial visit, it may not be advisable for policymakers to commit to a position on your issue.**
Your policymaker's eventual support will probably be stronger if it is based on a fully informed opinion. The policymaker may appreciate some time to reflect on the issue and to have his or her staff gather additional facts. At the end of your first visit, tell the policymaker you would appreciate his or her action and that you would be pleased to provide any further information that might be helpful. Contact your policymaker or staff member regarding the requested action or measure as time draws near for committee consideration or floor vote.
- **Letters and emails relating to an issue under consideration can be helpful in your advocacy efforts. Avoid form letters, emails, or postcards because they do not have as much impact.**
Drafts or outlines of letters developed by groups or organizations for their members to use should be adapted and tailored by the writer to reflect their personal concerns and experiences regarding the issue. Remember to put a "face" on the issue. Only you can tell your story!





Section Five

Sharing Your Message with Your Policymakers

How you present your message in writing, on the telephone, and in person when you address a gathering of policymakers is extremely important. Your advocacy efforts depend on sharing your message in a clear, concise way that can persuade policymakers.

Your options including writing to policymakers, either in a letter or an email, speaking with them by telephone, or sharing your message in person before a body of policymakers—at a meeting, a town hall or roundtable, or in front of a committee.

Presenting professional communication can get you in the door when it comes to having your message heard. The best time to contact a policymaker is before an issue is made public and before there is significant response from stakeholders. While this is not always possible, it could assure you that you will find an audience with the policymaker. The CHADD Public Policy Committee keeps an eye on federal and state initiatives. You should pay attention to ADHD issues that can arise in your community, including your town or city and your local school board. Local groups, such as parent-teacher organizations, service clubs, and community-based charity organizations, will have a better handle on county or school district issues.

Letter Writing

Writing letters in your own words is an efficient and effective way to influence policymakers. Unlike most legislative offices, local governments receive only a handful of letters on most issues. Each letter, then, carries real power when it conveys your personal story and puts a face on the issue.

There are a number of advantages to writing letters to communicate your views. Even when you present your issues orally during testimony or an office call, a letter or fact sheet summarizing the pertinent information can be a very useful tool.

To your own representative, your opinion carries more weight. You have the power to re-elect or deny any legislator his or her position at the local, state, and federal level. When multiplied by all of the members of your affiliate group who are engaged on an issue, that creates a voting bloc.

When is letter writing appropriate?

- **When you are not under time constraints.**
- **When you want to educate the policymaker.**
A letter can be an educational tool. The policymaker has a written record of the issue and your request that can be referred to and used as a resource document.
- **When you are presenting complex materials.**
Offering information on your issue in writing allows you to organize the information so that it can be more easily understood. A written presentation also allows the policymaker time to consider it and understand it more fully.
- **When you are sending it to a local policymaker or are able to hand-deliver it to the office.**
- **Use a letter to thank a legislator for supporting your issue.**
- **Use a letter as a follow-up to a visit with the legislator and to thank them for their time.**

Letter Writing Tips

You will want to use the business letter style of writing. You can see examples of how to write a business letter on [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/basic_business_letters/index.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/basic_business_letters/index.html).



Keep in mind that due to security concerns, mail to state and federal legislators can often be delayed. Allow several weeks before a key vote. If you are writing about an urgent issue, consider either fax or email.



Address the person to whom you are writing with their title or their preferred courtesy title:

Mayor Smith:	Councilmember Addison:
Supervisor Casey:	Mr. Willington:
Senator Jones:	Ms. Brown:
Representative Johns:	Dr. Grey:

Write your letter as three paragraphs or three parts. The opening paragraph should clearly state your position on the issue and why you hold the particular view about the issue. Urge the policymaker to take specific action (such as a vote for/against a particular bill or amendment, co-sponsor a bill, etc.). If you think the language in a bill should be changed, be sure to include the exact language you would suggest. This always makes it easier for the policymaker and far more likely your concerns will be properly addressed.

The next paragraph should provide the legislator or staff person with more information on the bill or action in question affects you or the ADHD community. Include evidence supporting your position. Include specific examples whenever possible.

The third paragraph should be a brief summary. Always try to thank the policymaker for her or his time. Include any action the policymaker has taken on your behalf in the past.

- **Keep the letter to one page.** Say what you need to say, but be as brief as possible.
- **Keep your letter focused on one issue.** A letter with a laundry list of issues has less impact than a letter focused only on one topic.
- **Include supporting information or one or two facts that support your position.** When possible, include a specific bill number.
- **Use a sincere and respectful tone.** Be positive.
- **Express your appreciation for considering your position.**
- **Provide contact information in case they desire additional information.**



Sample Letters to Legislators

April 19, 20—

Jennifer Smith
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com

The Honorable Jane B. Doe
Texas Senate
PO Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Dear Senator Doe:

Please actively support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act.

The Senate hearings, which were on March 14, show the importance of training our public school teachers to effectively educate all children with disabilities. Children with ADHD are the largest group of children with disabilities in our school system and are present in every classroom. When my son, Jimmy, has a teacher who understands his ADHD as a result of specialized training, his academic performance and classroom behavior are significantly improved. All of our children need the same level of expertise from their teachers.

I deeply appreciate your many years of support for all children with disabilities. I ask you to once again show your support by co-sponsoring SB 5142. Your active support can make the difference on passage of this bill. If I can provide you with any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Smith

Jennifer Smith

April 19, 20—

Tom Jackson
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, NY 12345
TomJackson@sampleemail.com

The Honorable Jack Smith
Member of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 1234
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Senator Smith:

I recently became aware of Senate Bill 3173, and I am writing to voice my concern. This bill appears to restrict open communication between teachers and parents about children with behavioral difficulties in the classroom. I am particularly concerned about the portions of the bill that would stop teachers from mentioning that any child may need an evaluation for ADHD.

When my daughter Anne was in second grade, we thought she was just a rambunctious and highly energetic child who did not do very well in school. However, when her teacher suggested we might want to have her evaluated for ADHD, it was a godsend. Now that she is receiving treatment, every aspect of her life (and our family life) has improved. We used to struggle every day to get Anne out the door and on her way to school. She hated going. But today, now that she is learning and experiencing success, she loves school.

Often school is the first place that a child has to control behavior and focus for extended periods of time. For Anne this was not possible until we realized she had ADHD. Passage of this bill will make it more difficult for thousands of families to understand their child may need treatment.

As a strong supporter of the rights of families and parents, please vote against a bill that would deprive parents of essential information to help their children. Please oppose any efforts to pass this legislation as it is now drafted. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Jackson

Tom Jackson

Emailing Your Policymakers

The internet can be a powerful tool in your advocacy work. You can use email and social media to get your message out to volunteers and supporters, as well as to communicate with decisionmakers and their staff. (For more on social media, be sure to check Section 6, Media Toolkit.)

When emailing policymakers, many of the same rules for letter writing apply. Email allows advocates to communicate with decision makers regardless of where they are. It allows for immediate and timely action.

In recent years, many federal and state lawmakers have come to prefer communication by email, rather than phone calls and postal mail. Legislative offices employ interns just to keep up with email. They weed out emails from non-constituents as well as form letters, and forward constituent emails to the appropriate staff member.

Often, people sending emails expect an immediate reply. Legislative staffers have told CHADD's Public Policy Committee that if you are not a constituent, and if you do not provide contact information, including address and phone number, then your email will not be answered. Email sent through a legislative member's website, such as those used by members of the House and Senate, must also have your name, address, and phone number if you expect a reply. Without that information, your email will likely be deleted without ever getting to the lawmaker.

You want your email to effectively convey your message:

- **Use the subject line to clearly state why you're emailing.** Do not use vague descriptions such as "Info." Use specific words about your message, such as "Oppose House Bill 000," or "Support for Disability Funding."
- **Make sure your email is formatted just like a business letter,** with your name, email address, street address, and phone number at the top.
- **Write clearly and briefly.** Share your message and how the proposed action affects you and your family. Directly state what you would like the lawmaker to do based on the information you've shared. Take a moment to review your message before sending it, checking for clarity, spelling, and tone.
- **Be aware of your signature line.** Use your signature line to include extra contact information.
- **Don't spam the lawmaker's inbox.** Your message will get through but multiple emails are likely to be deleted. And if you are part of an email campaign, be sure to write your own message and encourage others to write their own messages. Multiple copies of the same email from different addresses will also be disregarded.



Sample Email to Legislator

New Message



To John.Doe@ussenate.gov

Subject Please support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act

Jennifer Smith
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com
(123) 456-7890

Dear Senator Doe:

Please actively support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act.

The Senate hearings, which were on March 14, show the importance of training our public school teachers to effectively educate all children with disabilities. Children with ADHD are the largest group of children with disabilities in our school system and are present in every classroom. When my son, Jimmy, has a teacher who understands his ADHD, his academic performance and classroom behavior are significantly improved. All of our children need the same level of expertise from their teachers.

I deeply appreciate your many years of support for all children with disabilities. I ask you to once again show your support by co-sponsoring SB 5142. Your active support can make the difference on passage of this bill. If I can provide you with any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely
Jennifer Smith

Jennifer Smith
"Being a voice for the voiceless."
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com
(123) 456-7890



Send

Action Alerts to Your Team

Action Alerts are calls to action to advocates on a certain issue. They can be sent by mail, email, social media, and website postings. Like any form of communication, there are pros and cons to each.

Action Alerts are frequently used to generate action by advocates when a policymaker or voting body is set to make a decision on a key issue. They are a tool for advocates when immediate action is required.

Sample of a CHADD action alert


New Message

To

Local.Member@email.com

Subject

Action Alert! Contact Your Representative Today!



CHADD
Children & Adults with ADHD
Your Local Chapter's Name

Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad Want Your Help
Call for a Vote on Mental Health Parity!



BACKGROUND
Congressman Joe Kennedy III (D-RI) and Congressman Jim Ramstad (R-MN) introduced The Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act (HR 1402). This legislation to end insurance discrimination against mental health and addiction treatment is cosponsored by a bipartisan majority of 230 Representatives. The House leadership has refused to give it a fair up-or-down vote.

Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad have launched an effort to force a vote and your help is NEEDED! Under House rules, if 218 Representatives sign a "discharge petition," the bill is automatically brought to the floor for consideration. Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad recently launched a discharge petition and in two days 165 signatures were on the petition. To get the remaining 53 signatures, they need your help.

ACTION
Contact your Representative using our easy alert system below. Also, Members of Congress are campaigning this month and attending many public forums. These are perfect opportunities to ask them to commit to signing the discharge petition. Please do what you can, and ask others to do the same.

Where you can contact your Representative:

- Directory of Representatives <https://www.house.gov/representatives>
- Find Your Representative <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>



Send

Telephone Calls

Policymakers take notice when constituents call them about important issues. It is less time-consuming than letter writing. Using the telephone to contact legislators is a traditional way advocates can quickly get their voices heard.

While no strategy takes the place of a face-to-face meeting, calling the policymaker's office ensures that someone will answer. Advocates need to be aware that they may not get to talk directly to the policymaker and will likely speak with a staff member or intern, but they can discuss their issue with the staff member and tell them what advocates in the their area want the policymaker to do. Most offices also track these calls to determine how much outreach they are receiving on a particular issue.

Phone Tips

When calling policymakers:

- Prepare your message before you call.
- Be willing to speak with the staff member who answers. Advocates often do not speak to the policymaker directly; the staff members are the ones who have the ear of the decision maker. Staff members and interns track and report the number of calls both for and against active legislation.
- Identify yourself as a constituent. You may be asked for your home address or zip code and you should feel comfortable providing it.
- Say exactly what you are call about. If there is a bill number, make sure to reference the bill or issue to make your point.
- Say specifically what you want the legislator to do (such as vote against budget cuts, support a bill, etc.).
- Leave your name and contact information, including your postal and email addresses, if requested. This will ensure that the policymaker knows you are a constituent and can send a reply if needed.
- Always be polite and pleasant. Never criticize or attempt to debate. Staff members and interns are trained not to engage in debate with advocates over the phone.
- Get to your point immediately. Chances are the call will only last a few minutes, so being to the point is critical.
- Finish the call by thanking the policymaker or staff member for the time and attention to the issue.



Phone calls to legislators are a traditional way to quickly get your voice heard.



Giving Public Testimony

The more involved you become in advocating for people with ADHD, the more likely you are to be asked to speak before a state agency, workgroup, board, advisory committee, or before a state or federal legislative committee. A public hearing is the only official way for a non-elected person to participate in the legislative process.



Local municipal boards and school boards will often allow residents the chance to speak during the regular meeting, rather than scheduling a special session. If you plan to speak at a local board meeting, the following points will be useful. If you have questions, speak with the clerk of the board before the meeting.

Preparing to give your testimony

When planning to give testimony, please contact CHADD's national office for assistance. We have facts to help support your position and/or sample legislation addressing priority issues. Often we can give you guidance on the best way to proceed. Contact the public policy committee staff liaison at (301) 306-7070 ext. 123 or email PublicPolicyLiaison@CHADD.org.

- **Bring written copies of your testimony.**

Make sure you have enough copies for all of the committee members and for other interested persons. This is particularly important when you have only a limited time to speak but have important material you may not be able to cover in that time. Written testimony becomes part of the record of the committee's proceedings just as the oral testimony does. When you are called to testify, give your written testimony to the clerk for the committee or the person responsible for taping the hearing. They will distribute it to the members.

- **You'll be asked to sign in and provide basic information about your testimony.**

Often you will need to inform the staff ahead of time that you would like to testify at the hearing. Look for the contact information in the announcement about the hearing. You can usually reply by email or phone. At other times, you will register on site. Cards are sometimes provided for this purpose. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance if needed. The list of those testifying is given to the chairperson of the committee and is used to call people up for the testimony. Generally, the earlier you sign in on the day of testimony, the earlier you will be called to speak.

Committee hearings during the legislative session can be very long. It is not uncommon to wait several hours to testify. If you cannot stay, give your written testimony to the committee clerk; ask that it be included as part of the record and that it is distributed to the members. It's always a good idea to leave a copy of written testimony.

- **Testimony before state agency boards and other bodies and before legislative committees is usually recorded as part of the record of the group's official proceedings.**

Make sure that you use the microphone provided and speak directly into it. If you need to use an interpreter to help you with verbal communication, make sure that person is also speaking clearly into the microphone.

- **Most state agencies and legislative committees will impose time limits on how long you can speak.**

Normally speakers are limited to three to five minutes. Because of this, it is vital that you have your main points at hand and that you can get to the point quickly. Crafting your story to address the major points to cover if testimony time is limited will become critical. You can always elaborate in your written testimony if there is more that you feel needs to be stated.

- **Expect people to move around.**

Often during public testimony at committee hearings, policymakers get up and move around the room, speak to other members of the committee, or leave altogether. They may even go to get coffee or lunch. Do not be offended by this. This does not mean that your testimony will not be heard or is being discounted. Sometimes legislators are members of a number of committees and duties in these committees may overlap. The legislator may also be called away on urgent business or may simply need a break. Hours are long at the end of the session. Recordings of the testimony are available after the meeting. Committee staff may summarize the key points for legislators.

Many legislative committees meet in the house and senate chambers when the houses are not in session. Some audience members may be seated but many stand at the edges of the room. People are often moving around and side conversations are common, even while testimony is underway. Agency meetings are usually a little quieter. Be prepared to handle distractions.



Expect 3-5 minutes to speak. It's vital to have your main points at hand and to get to the point quickly. Craft your story to address the major points when time is limited.



- **Agencies, boards, etc., are required under the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide accommodations for people with disabilities when they participate in hearings, meetings, etc.**

Notify the coordinator of the meeting or the committee clerk a day or two before you are scheduled to testify should you or a member of your chapter need accommodations. The contact person is usually listed in the notice of the meeting.

Resource: How to Address Elected Officials in Writing and When Speaking

Addressing elected officials, legislators, and other policymakers correctly shows professionalism and politeness. It's another way of making sure your message is well received.

Federal Elected Officials:

United States Senate

The mail address for any US Senator is:

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (last name):

Speaking: "Senator (last name)"



You can find the postal and email addresses for your US Senator at United States Senate, Senators of the Current Congress at https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.

You can reach any US Senator through the Capital switchboard by calling (202) 224-3121.

The two US Senators from my home state are:

- Senator _____
- Senator _____

United States House of Representatives

The address for any US Representative is:

The Honorable (full name)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (last name):

Speaking: "Representative (last name)"
"Congressman (last name)"

You can find the postal and email addresses of your US Representatives at the United States House of Representatives, Directory of Representatives at <https://www.house.gov/representatives>.

Telephone any Representative:

Any member of the House of Representatives can be reached by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 225-3121. Please note this is a different number than the one for calls to your Senators.

The US Representative from my area is:

- Representative _____

State Elected Officials:

Contact information for your state officials is easily available on the internet. USA.gov provides contact information for every state and territory at State Government <https://www.usa.gov/states-and-territories> .

Governor:

The Honorable (full name)

Governor of (State)

Dear Governor (last name):

Speaking: "Governor (last name)"

Lieutenant Governor:

The Honorable (full name)

Lt. Governor of (State)

State Representative or State Senator:

The Honorable (full name)

(State) House of Representatives or Assembly

(State) Senate

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):

Speaking: "Representative (last name)"

"Senator (last name)"



Village, City, Town, and County Officials:

You can find county contact information for your local county leadership on the website for the National Association for Counties at www.naco.org. Go to About Counties and click on Find Counties.

Alternately, you can put the name of your county, town, city, or village into your search engine to find the municipal

Mayor

City of (city)

Village of (village)

Dear Mayor (last name):

Speaking: "Mayor (last name)"

City Council:

The Honorable (full name)

Council Member

Dear Councilman/Councilwoman (last name):

Speaking: "Councilman/Councilwoman (last name)"

County Commissioner:

The Honorable (full name)

County Commissioner

Precinct Number

Dear Commissioner (last name):

Speaking: "Commissioner (last name)"

The preferred closing for all of the above letters is: Sincerely yours,

Remember: The exact titles for state and local officials may vary according to each individual state. Always double-check the address shown above for correctness.



Section Six

Media Toolkit

Media relations is an important function for anyone who hopes to effect change. This is particularly true when you're advocating for ADHD issues and you're a CHADD affiliate coordinator, because you work every day to make a difference for people living with ADHD. CHADD developed the Media Toolkit to help you in your media outreach, providing details on how to reach television, radio, newspaper, and internet journalists with your message. We hope you'll find this toolkit useful in all of your endeavors with the media, either as an advocate or as a coordinator sharing information about your CHADD affiliate's activities.



Working with Reporters

The best way to begin effective media relations is to read your daily newspaper, watch the local TV newscasts, and listen to local radio, in order to identify the programs and reporters that cover mental health and education issues. By doing your research, you will be able to identify specific reporters, their specialties, and the topics they usually cover. If you're dealing with a print reporter, review the newspaper online, search by the reporter's name (byline), and review that reporter's past articles. Once you've have learned who would be appropriate to work with, you're ready to reach out. Following are some techniques you can use to open the door to good working relationships with the media.

Contacting a reporter to suggest a story idea is referred to as pitching a story. Before you begin the process, be sure to have all your information and resources in place. You may ask to schedule a meeting with reporters or editorial boards. This is a good way to educate journalists about a given issue, and while they don't always result immediately in a story, reporters will have a better understanding of ADHD the next time the topic is covered.

While one-on-one discussions can be effective, sometimes you'll need to develop written materials, such as press releases, media advisories, opinion/editorials, and letters to the editor. Press releases and media advisories are useful tools for alerting the media to upcoming events, such as your regular or annual meeting. Remember, there is competition between media outlets, so you will want to have something unique for each reporter. Opinion/editorials (often called op/eds) are rather hard to get published, but are quite effective when they appear. And a letter to the editor is another effective technique, written in response to articles or information recently published or broadcast.

When you've established yourself with the local media as a credible source of information about ADHD, you may receive calls asking you to comment or be interviewed about a relevant story or topic. Be aware that there is no such thing as "off the record." Every word you say can be printed or broadcast. Be sure to use your words carefully. When responding to a question, begin with a general statement that sums up your position succinctly and accurately. Then you can narrow down your response with specifics.

Your goal when speaking with any member of the media is always is to come across as cordial, cooperative, and knowledgeable. If you have questions about media relations protocol, contact the CHADD communications and media relations department at Attention@CHADD.org.

The Elements of a Good Story

As the old saying goes, you never have a second chance to make a good first impression. One of the best ways to make a favorable impression on journalists is to be prepared when you approach them. That means you should have a story idea that the reporter, editor, or producer will find unique, interesting, and well thought-out. Editors and producers typically define "news" as a story that includes one or more of the following elements:

Timeliness. Media outlets compete fiercely to be the first to disseminate a story. Your success may be based on whether you can help the journalist you are working with meet their deadlines and be the first to deliver a story to the public.

Novelty. New and unusual topics or angles attract readers. Don't pitch the same stories that typically run about ADHD (such as "Back to School"). Think of viewpoints that haven't been so thoroughly explored ("A Teacher's View of ADHD in the Classroom").

Controversy. It's unfortunate, but conflict increases interest. Those of us working on mental health issues know that controversy is not in short supply. While you may find yourself working on a controversial story, you should always help reporters focus on the science. It is also always a good idea to let the communications and media relations department at CHADD know when you are working on stories with this sometimes necessary but always volatile news element.

Proximity. People want to know what is happening in their own backyard. Make sure your story ideas focus on local issues.

Emotional Appeal or Human Interest. The public, and thus the news media, enjoy stories that involve human emotion and pull at the heartstrings. You'll probably get a more positive response from the media if you relate the facts through personal stories from parents and children affected by ADHD.



Possible story ideas:

- Impact of untreated ADHD
- Older adults with ADHD
- ADHD in Your State/Area (e.g., public policy initiatives designed to protect or hinder the rights of those with ADHD)
- Parents who learned about their own ADHD once their children were diagnosed

Your Press Materials

The *press release* is one of the most common ways to communicate your story to the media. Press releases are typically one to two pages in length, and should be sent via email several weeks in advance of your event. The first paragraph or lead provides the "who, what, when, where, and why" of an event or newsworthy item. The format is a fairly structured one, set by convention and tradition, and must include the elements listed below. The easiest way to organize this initial information is to follow the sample included in this toolkit.

A press release should include:

- A descriptive headline that catches or piques interest
- Contact information (must appear before the story begins)
- A dateline, which includes the geographic location from where the release is being sent and the month, date, and year; appears prior to the first sentence in the opening paragraph
- An opening paragraph with the who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Quotes from the affiliate coordinator, a parent, an expert, teacher, etc.
- Marks indicating the story has ended (either -30- or ###) at the bottom of the document

A *media advisory* or *media alert* briefly explains a program or event in a quick, easy-to-read format. These documents are always one page long and single-spaced. Photo and interview opportunities also should be noted. To invite television coverage of an upcoming event, email your information directly to the "News Assignment Desk." The correct contact information is typically available on a station's website. Some websites also provide specific email templates to send materials. When in doubt, call the station and ask where to send your event advisory.

Media advisories should include:

- A descriptive headline that catches or piques interest
- Contact information (must appear before the story begins)
- When your event will take place, including both date and time
- Where your event will take place
- Why the event is important and will benefit the public
- How people can learn more or register (if appropriate)

A *letter to the editor* or *op/ed* can be used to communicate your message, particularly if you want to respond to an article or column in your local newspaper, or address a state or local issue. If you decide to submit a letter to the editor, you will want to keep the letter very brief. Every media outlet has its own set of guidelines about when and how they will accept these materials. If you fail to follow the rules, your letter or essay may be discarded without being read. Specific requirements for letters to the editor and op/eds can be found on the individual websites for the media outlets.

Once you have developed your materials, you can email them to local reporters. Typically, email addresses for reporters can be found on the media outlet's website. Many print outlets also list email addresses in the publication.

The Elements of a Good Interview

If your pitch has interested a reporter, you'll most likely get a call asking you to provide more information or answer some questions. The key to feeling comfortable and doing well in an interview is knowing what you want to say and saying it clearly. Most interviews are brief, so you must deliver your messages quickly, clearly, and often. Many times, especially in radio or TV interviews, only one quote or sound-bite is used in the final piece, so you have to make every word count.



To prepare for an interview, craft three message points that clearly communicate the information you want to leave with your audience. Use quotable language, speak in short sentences, and include statistics and real-world examples to paint a compelling picture. For instance, don't say that a child with ADHD may be hyperactive. Instead, you can say she may not be able to sit still, cannot finish a five-minute quiz, and repeatedly gets out of her seat and moves around the classroom. Try to paint a picture with your words.

Reporters often already know the direction their story will take. They are looking to you to support or challenge their angle. The best answer to a question comes from listening carefully to the question. If you need to, pause before you answer to allow yourself time to formulate your response. If you don't understand a question, ask politely that it be repeated. Do your best to respond to the question, and try to bridge to your message points. A bridge enables you to shift the conversation back to your key messages, allowing you to deliver the points you want to make.

Quick Tips in Interview Etiquette

Your credibility depends on how you present your knowledge to the interviewer and audience. Here are more tips for a successful interview:

- **Set ground rules.** Before the interview, establish the time, date, place, length, and subject(s) to be covered. Knowing what to expect will help you prepare.
- **Be personable and engaging.** Call the interviewer by name; make small talk before and after the interview.
- **Remember that nothing is off the record.** Never assume that the interview is over or hasn't begun.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Close your door, hold all telephone calls, and don't allow interruptions. Give the reporter your full attention.

If the reporter has a negative perception or agenda, the questions you're asked will reflect this point of view. Rather than answer controversial questions, when your responses might be misconstrued or might place you or CHADD in an unfavorable light, you can say simply "I don't have the answer for that. I can find the answer and get back to you." You should never feel obligated to accept unfamiliar facts or figures. Use your time to set the record straight or present facts. You might say, "This is a common misperception. Here's why..." Never say "no comment"; it is construed as a very negative response. If you have any concerns or reservations, please contact the national office of CHADD.

How CHADD Can Help You

As you work with reporters to disseminate your message about ADHD, we encourage you to stay in close contact with the CHADD communications and media relations department. The department is staffed by professionals with substantial experience that could prove beneficial to your efforts. If you have a media call that you have any concerns about, please feel free to contact us. Good luck with all your efforts!

CHADD Communications & Media Relations

Susan Buningh, MRE
Director of Communications
Attention@CHADD.org
(866) 200-8098 x102

Public Policy Committee Staff Liaison

Karen Sampson Hoffman, MA
Public Policy Committee Liaison
publicpolicyliaison@CHADD.org
(866) 200-8098 x123

Online Resources

- CHADD and CHADD's National Resource Center on ADHD: www.chadd.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) www.nih.gov

[See Resources for samples of press releases, media alerts, and letters to the editor in Resources.](#)

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching upwards towards the center, creating a sense of unity and collective effort. The hands are positioned around the central text, with some reaching from the left, some from the right, and some from the bottom. The overall tone is light and positive.

Section Seven

Coalition Building



Coalition building is a time-tested and proven legislative strategy. When an organization wants to increase its political muscle, it will often form coalitions with other groups with aligned interests. A coalition is a loose collection of groups that come together to accomplish a certain mission or goal. Coalitions are excellent at capturing a legislator's attention. Not only do you have the support and numbers of the specific organizations behind them; they allow a legislator to feel secure that she or he is receiving accurate and credible information from the experts on that particular issue.

Coalitions also make sense from a financial perspective. When organizations pool their resources and expertise, they dramatically increase the chances of achieving a legislative success. Whether you want to hold a conference, place ads, or hire a lobbyist, by pooling resources in the coalition, everyone is able to obtain more value for their money.

There are two basic types of coalitions: short-term and long-term. Short-term coalitions are normally built around a specific issue or cause. Once that matter has been resolved, the coalition will disband. Short-term coalitions often can bring together groups that may not have very much in common except for the specific issue they are working on.

Long-term coalitions work together for longer durations and normally bring together groups with a great deal in common. You may want to reach out to and work with state chapters of other national organizations. State chapters normally have clearly defined interests because of their national affiliation. They traditionally have the staff and infrastructure to sustain lasting relationships with other organizations.

Coalitions can have different types of relationships, interactions, and processes. The coalition type is often determined by the amount and degree of shared interests and goals. To have a sustained impact, some key components are required:

- **Mutual understanding:** Each organization in the coalition should understand and respect the other's mission, goals, and purpose. The coalition should have a clearly defined set of goals and a plan of action to achieve those goals.
- **Appreciation of differences:** Coalitions by their nature are comprised of groups with varying interest and viewpoints. The goal of a coalition is to bring likeminded organizations together; however, that does not mean you will agree on all decisions.
- **Organizational flexibility:** Every organization in the coalition has its own operational structure. You should not expect or impose your organizational structure on the coalition. Every coalition is different and should be able to develop and promulgate its own operating system.

Often coalitions are created out of crisis. You may want to form a coalition before the crisis occurs and develop the relationship during the positive times—although this is easier said than done. This allows the group to be more creative and proactive in its efforts rather than reactive.



Form a coalition with likeminded organizations before a crisis occurs and develop the relationship during the positive times.



Developing Effective Coalitions: The 8-Step Process



[Infographic from Prevention Institute](#)

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching upwards towards the center, creating a sense of unity and support. The hands are positioned around the central text, with some at the top, some on the sides, and some at the bottom, all with palms facing up or slightly angled. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is positive and inclusive.

Resources

Having resources and samples available can make many steps in advocacy easier. We have complied some of the more commonly needed resources and samples. To find more and to get more information, please visit the CHADD website at www.CHADD.org.

Frequently Asked Questions About ADHD

What is ADHD?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a chronic neurodevelopmental disorder affecting 11 percent of school-age children. Symptoms continue into adulthood in more than three-quarters of cases. ADHD is characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Read more at [About ADHD](#).

What's the difference between ADD and ADHD?

In 1994, the name of the disorder was changed in a way that is confusing for many people. Since that time all forms of attention deficit disorder are officially called "attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder," regardless of whether the individual has symptoms of hyperactivity or not. Even though these are the official labels, a lot of professionals and lay people still use both terms: ADD and ADHD. Some use those terms to designate the old subtypes; others use ADD just as a shorter way to refer to any presentation.

What is executive function?

Executive function refers to brain functions that activate, organize, integrate, and manage other functions. It enables individuals to account for short- and long-term consequences of their actions and to plan for those results. It also allows individuals to make real-time evaluations of their actions and make necessary adjustments if those actions are not achieving the desired result.

How is ADHD diagnosed?

There is no single test to diagnose ADHD. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation is necessary to establish a diagnosis, rule out other causes, and determine the presence or absence of coexisting conditions. Such an evaluation requires time and effort and should include a careful history and a clinical assessment of the individual's academic, social, and emotional functioning and developmental level.

How do I find a doctor or mental health professional?

When seeking an evaluation or treatment for ADHD, it is important to see a qualified, licensed healthcare professional. In addition to ensuring that a particular professional has the required training, it is also important to work with a professional who has experience in dealing with this disorder.

There are several types of professionals who typically diagnose ADHD. These include: physicians (especially psychiatrists, pediatricians, neurologists), psychologists, social workers, nurse practitioners, and other licensed counselors or therapists (e.g. professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, etc.).

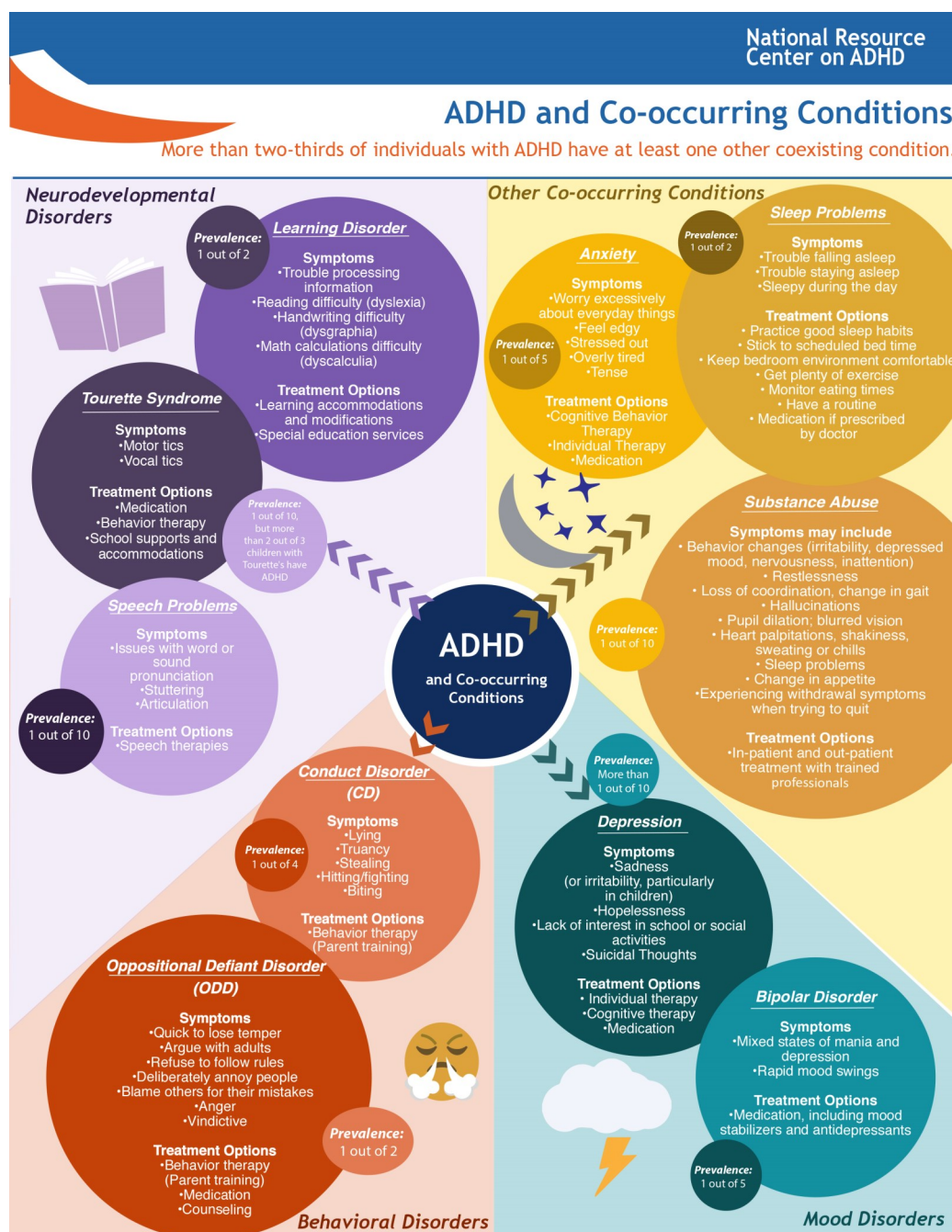
Obesity and ADHD: What's the connection?

For adults with ADHD, the challenges of healthy weight management appear to be greater than for those without ADHD. One study sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health found that adults with ADHD are 1.58 times more likely to be overweight and 1.81 times more likely to be obese than adults who do not have ADHD.

Children with ADHD also appear to have higher rates of overweight and obesity than their peers without the disorder. However, whether or not a child's ADHD is being treated is also an important factor. Data from the 2003–2004 National Survey of Children's Health found that children whose ADHD treatment plan did not include medication were approximately one and a half times more likely to be overweight than children who received medication as part of their ADHD treatment.

What other conditions can occur with ADHD?

More than two thirds of individuals with ADHD have at least one other coexisting condition. The symptoms of ADHD—constant motion and fidgetiness, interrupting and blurting out, difficulty sitting still, and need for constant reminders, etc.—may overshadow these other disorders. But just as untreated ADHD can present challenges in everyday life, other disorders can also cause unnecessary suffering in individuals with ADHD and their families if left untreated. Any disorder can coexist with ADHD, but certain disorders tend to occur more commonly with ADHD. The most common conditions found in individuals with ADHD are disruptive behavior disorders, mood disorders, anxiety, tics or Tourette syndrome, learning disorders, sleep disorders, and substance abuse.



This infographic is supported by the Cooperative Agreement Number NU38DD0053756 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.

- o ADHD and Coexisting Disorders. National Resource Center on ADHD: A Program of CHADD, 2015.
- o ADHD, Sleep and Sleep Disorders. National Resource Center on ADHD: A Program of CHADD, 2015.
- o American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- o Kooij JJ, Huis M, Asherson P, et al. (2012 July). Distinguishing comorbidity and successful management of adult ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*. 16(5 Suppl):35-195.
- o Mestre, Cristina. Substance Abuse Rates Higher in Teenagers with ADHD, Molina-Led Study Finds. *PittChronicle*, March 11, 2013.



4601 Presidents Drive, Suite 300
Lanham, MD 20706
800-233-4050
www.chadd.org/nrc

Sample Media Releases

Template for Event News Release

CHADD Hosts Local Event Name to Recognize ADHD Awareness Month

(Today's month, date, 20—)—In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the local chapter or support group of the nonprofit organization CHADD will host (Event Name) on (October date), 20—. The event will be held at location from (start time to end time, including a.m. and/or p.m.), and will feature (list your chapter's activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.). Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register, details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.

"The goal our (Event Name) is to raise awareness about ADHD and to let everyone in our community know that they can turn to CHADD for the support they need," says (first and last name of local representative and his or her involvement with CHADD, i.e., co-chair of the local chapter in particular town or city). Name of local chapter or support group is one of 124 local groups affiliated with CHADD, the leading resource on ADHD. "Despite overwhelming scientific evidence, there is still a lot of inaccurate information out there about ADHD," adds (last name only). "Many people don't understand it and some even doubt its very existence. We want people to know that ADHD is real, that it is manageable with the proper treatment, and that CHADD can help."

ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with daily functioning and life's achievements. It affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the United States. Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed. ADHD life is riddled with difficulties in functioning, interpersonal, social, academic and professional skills, causing significant impairments in school, work, relationships, and all aspects of daily life. ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication.

CHADD provides support, training, education, and advocacy at both the national and local levels for families, adults, educators, and healthcare professionals impacted by ADHD. At the national level, CHADD offers a comprehensive range of programs and services including peer training for parents and teachers, educational materials, webinars, local support groups, a helpline, an annual international conference, and public advocacy. At the local level, CHADD is an invaluable resource in the community, with 124 support groups across the United States that encourage peer relationships, foster connectedness, and enhance access to local resources. CHADD serves as home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, making it the most trusted purveyor of reliable, science-based information regarding current medical research and ADHD management. Visit CHADD.org to learn more.

Contact:

Your Name:

Your Telephone Number:

Your Email Address:

Template for Event Media Advisory

CHADD Hosts (*Local Event Name*) to Recognize ADHD Awareness Month

What: (*Event Name*) to raise awareness about ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) during ADHD Awareness Month in October. The event will feature (*list your activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.*).

Who: Hosted by (*the name of your local chapter or support group*) of CHADD, the leading resource on ADHD. Members of the community are invited to attend.

Where: Location
 Street Address
 City, State, Zip Code

When: Day of Week, Month, Date, Year
 Start Time to End Time (Include a.m. and/or p.m.)

Background:

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence—endorsed by the most prestigious medical organizations in the world—there is still a lot of inaccurate information circulating about Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with daily functioning and life's achievements. It affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the United States. Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed. ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication. CHADD provides support, training, education, and advocacy at both the national and local levels for families, adults, educators, and healthcare professionals impacted by ADHD. Visit CHADD.org to learn more.

Contact:

Your Name:
Your Telephone Number:
Your Email Address:

Template for Event Calendar Listing

(*Event Name*)

In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the local chapter or support group of the nonprofit organization CHADD will host *Event Name* on October, date, 20—. The event will be held at location from start time to end time (include am and/or pm), and will feature (*list your activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.*). Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register, details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.

Contact

Your Name:
Your Telephone Number:
Your Email Address:

Templates for Social Media Messages

Social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, are easy and highly effective ways to share information. Following is a list of general messages that we recommend that your local chapter or support group, and the individual members of your group, can send out from your Twitter and Facebook accounts during ADHD Awareness Month. We suggest sending out tweets and posts on a daily or ongoing basis (in any order you would like). In addition, be sure to follow CHADD's national tweets and posts, and to retweet and share them with your followers.

For Twitter, be sure to always include the following hashtags and CHADD's Twitter username:

@CHADD_ADHD

#ADHD

#ADHDAwarenessMonth

#ADHDChangetheConversation

#ADHDCon2019 (annual conference hashtag; will be updated each year)

For Twitter

1. October is ADHD National Awareness Month. Join ([the local affiliate](#)) of CHADD at our ([Event Name](#)) on October ([Date](#)). For more ([info, your website or contact information](#)).
2. Celebrate ADHD Awareness Month with CHADD at our ([Event Name](#)) on October ([Date](#)). For more ([info, website, tickets or contact information](#)).
3. Help raise awareness for ADHD. The local chapter or support group of CHADD is hosting an [Event Name](#) on October date. For more ([information, website, or to contact](#)).

For Facebook

1. In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the ([local chapter or support group](#)) of the non-profit organization CHADD will host ([Event Name](#)) on October ([date](#)), 20—. The event will be held at location from start time to end time (include am and/or pm), and will feature ([list activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc](#)). Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register ([list details](#)). Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.
2. Please join us in recognizing ADHD Awareness Month when the local chapter or support group of the nonprofit organization CHADD hosts [Event Name](#) on October ([date](#)), 20—. The event will be held at ([location](#)) from ([start time to end time, include am and/or pm](#)), and will feature [list activities, \(such as a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.\)](#). For more information or to register, details about how to. Include whether there is a registration fee or cost to attend.

Social Media Messages

1. October is ADHD Awareness Month. Get the facts and find support at [CHADD.org](#).
2. ADHD is real. Check out the new animated video produced by CHADD at <https://youtu.be/jdPlyZ23ons>
3. Thirty years of brain imaging research shows that the brain of a person with ADHD is different.
4. There are many myths and misunderstandings about ADHD. Check out the most common ones here: <https://chadd.org/about-adhd/myths-and-misunderstandings> .
5. ADHD affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the US.
6. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence rate of ADHD in the US is 8% for children and 4.4% for adults.
7. A comprehensive review of 19 research studies reporting on the excess cost of ADHD in the US found a range between \$143 billion to \$266 billion annually.
8. Contrary to popular belief, at least 60% of children with ADHD continue to exhibit symptoms of the disorder to an impairing degree during adulthood.
9. Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed.

10. As many as 17.5% of children currently diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving proper treatment.
11. It's estimated that only one in five adults with ADHD is diagnosed.
12. ADHD life is riddled with difficulties in functioning, interpersonal, social, academic, and professional skills.
13. Without proper treatment, ADHD can cause significant impairments in school, work, relationships, and all aspects of daily life.
14. ADHD can have potentially devastating consequences when not properly identified, diagnosed, and treated.
15. ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication.
16. CHADD provides support, training, education and advocacy for children and adults with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. [CHADD.org](https://chadd.org)
17. As home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the CDC, CHADD is the most trusted source for reliable, science-based information. [CHADD.org](https://chadd.org)
18. CHADD has 124 local chapters and support groups across the US that encourage peer relationships, foster connectedness, and enhance access to local resources.
19. CHADD represents more than 12,000 members, including individuals, families, educators, and healthcare professionals.
20. CHADD offers comprehensive programs and services at both the national and local levels.
21. CHADD provides peer training for parents and teachers, educational materials, webinars, local support groups, a helpline, an annual international conference, and public advocacy. [CHADD.org](https://chadd.org)
22. Tune in to CHADD's monthly online webcasts featuring leading ADHD experts. Webcasts are free and anyone can participate. Learn more at [CHADD.org/ask-the-expert](https://chadd.org/ask-the-expert).
23. Visit [CHADD.org](https://chadd.org) for the latest and most reliable information regarding current medical research and ADHD management.

Glossary of Legislative Terms

ACT—A bill or measure after it has passed one or both chambers. Also used to denote a law in place.

ACTION—A description of a step that a bill undergoes as it moves through the legislative process.

ADJOURNMENT—Ends a legislative day (recess does not end a day).

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE—Adjournment with no set time to meet again. Denotes the end of a Congressional session.

ADOPTION—Approval or acceptance. Usually applied to amendments or resolutions.

ADVICE AND CONSENT—Constitutionally based power of the Senate to advise the President and give consent to proposed treaties and Presidential appointments.

AMENDMENT—A proposal to change, or an actual change to a bill, motion, act, or the Constitution.

APPORTIONMENT—Allocation of legislative seats by law. The seats in the House of Representatives are apportioned to states based on each state's population.

APPROPRIATION—An authorization by the legislature for the expenditure of money for a public purpose. In most instances, money cannot be withdrawn from a "treasury" except through a specific appropriation.

AUTHOR—The legislator who files a bill and guides it through the legislative process.

AUTHORIZATION—A legislative action establishing a program and general amounts of money to fund that program. An appropriation provides the actual funds.

BILL—A proposed law that requires passage by both the House of Representatives and Senate. A bill is the primary means used to create and change the laws. Bill types include: Senate and House bills, Senate and House joint resolutions, Senate and House concurrent resolutions, and Senate and House resolutions.

BILL ANALYSIS—A document prepared for all bills reported out of committee that explains in nonlegal language what a bill will do. A bill analysis may include background information on the measure, a statement of purpose, and a section-by-section analysis.

BIPARTISAN—A term used to refer to an effort endorsed by both political parties or a group composed of members of both political parties.

BLOC—Representative or Senators who are members of a group with common interests.

BUDGET—The President's annual proposal to Congress anticipating revenue and expenditures by the federal government for the upcoming fiscal year.

CALENDAR—A list of bills or resolutions to be considered by a committee, the House, or the Senate.

CAUCUS—The meeting of members of a political party, usually to decide policy or select members to fill positions. Also refers to the group itself.

CHAMBER—Either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE—Chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives.

CLOTURE—The closing of debate in the Senate, or ending of a filibuster by the required three-fifths vote (60 senators), thereby allowing a bill to be voted on.

COMMITTEE REPORT – The text of a bill or resolution and its required attachments that is prepared when the measure is reported from a committee for further consideration by the members of the chamber. The committee report includes the recommendations of the committee regarding action on the measure by the full House or Senate and is generally necessary before a measure can proceed through the legislative process.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE—Business is expedited in the House of Representatives when it resolves itself to the “Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.” Rules are relaxed and a quorum is easier to obtain. The committee must comprise a minimum of one hundred members.

CONFEREES—Members of a conference committee that is composed of Senators and Representatives named to work out differences between same-subject bills passed by both chambers.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—The Government Printing Office publishes this daily account of House and Senate debates, votes, and comments.

CONSTITUENT – A citizen residing within the district of an elected representative.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION—Legislation providing continued funding for a federal department or program, usually at the previous fiscal level. Used when Congress has failed to pass necessary appropriations bills for a new fiscal year.

CONVENE – To assemble or call to order the members of a legislative body.

ENACTING CLAUSE—The initial language in a bill saying “be it enacted.” To kill a bill, a legislator will move to “strike the enacting clause.”

ENGROSSED BILL—Official copy of a bill passed by the House or Senate.

ENROLLED BILL—Final certified copy of a bill passed in identical form by the House and Senate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION—A meeting closed to the public.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS—Comments that were not spoken on the floor but inserted into the Congressional Record by a Senator or Representative.

FILIBUSTER—Talking and debating a bill in an effort to change it or kill it. Easier in the Senate than in the House because of the Senate’s more relaxed rules concerning debate.

FISCAL YEAR—A twelve-month period for using federal funds, beginning October 1st. It is the year in which the period ends.

FLOOR – A traditional term for the meeting chamber of either house.

FLOOR ACTION – Action taken by either house on a bill reported by a committee. Subject to rules adopted by the respective house, its members may propose amendments, enter debate, seek to promote or prevent a bill’s passage, and vote on its final passage in that house.

FRANKING PRIVILEGE—The right of a Senator or Representative (or member of a federal agency) to use the US Postal

Service for official business at no charge.

GERMANE—Pertinent, bearing on the subject.

GERRYMANDER – To divide a state, county, or other political subdivision into election districts in an unnatural manner to give a political party or ethnic group advantage over its opponents.

HOPPER—Box in which proposed bills are placed.

INTRODUCED – The version of a bill or resolution as it was filed in the House or Senate.

JOINT COMMITTEE—A committee of Senators and Representatives.

MAJORITY LEADER—Leader of the majority party in either the House or the Senate.

MARKUP—The section-by-section review and revision of a bill by committee members.

MOTION – A formal suggestion presented to a legislative body for action by one of its members while the body is meeting.

NONPARTISAN – Free from party domination.

PAIRING—An agreement by two members of Congress to be recorded on opposite sides of an issue if one or both persons will be absent when the vote is taken. The votes are not counted, but make the members' positions known.

PASSAGE – Approval of a measure by the full body.

POINT OF ORDER—An objection by a Senator or Representative to a rule being violated.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE—The Vice President is president of the Senate, but is present only for crucial votes. In his place, the Senate elects a president pro tempore, or temporary president, who presides, or, when routine measures are being considered, assigns the job to a junior Senator.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – Permission to view the proceedings from the floor of the chamber rather than from the public gallery.

PREVIOUS QUESTION—By a motion to “move the previous question,” a Representative seeks to end debate and bring an issue to a vote. Senators do not have this debate-limiting device.

PRIVATE BILL—A bill that provides for special treatment of an individual or business entity. Such a bill is subject to presidential veto.

PRIVILEGE—A privileged question is a motion that is considered before other motions. A “question of privilege” relates to the personal privilege of a Senator or Representative.

PUBLIC HEARING – A meeting of a House or Senate committee or subcommittee during which public testimony may be heard and formal action may be taken on any measure or matter before the committee or subcommittee.

QUORUM—The number of members of a legislative body who must be present before business may be conducted.

RANKING MEMBER—A member of the majority party on a committee who ranks first in seniority after the chair.

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER—The senior member (in terms of service) of the minority party on a committee.

RECESS—Concludes legislative business and sets time for the next meeting of the legislative body.

REPORT—A committee’s written record of its actions and views on a bill. The committee reports its findings to the House or Senate.

RESOLUTION—A formal statement of a decision or opinion by the House or Senate, or both. A simple resolution is made by one chamber and generally deals with that chamber’s rules or prerogatives. A concurrent resolution is presented in both chambers and usually expresses a Congressional view on a matter not within Congressional jurisdiction. A joint resolution requires approval in both chambers and goes to the President for approval. Simple and concurrent resolutions do not go to the President.

RIDER—A provision added to a bill so it may “ride” to approval on the strength of the bill. Generally, riders are placed on appropriations bills.

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE—The chief administrative officer of the Senate.

SENATORIAL COURTESY—The Senate’s tradition of honoring any objections by Senators of the President’s party to appointments in the states of the objecting Senators.

SERGEANT AT ARMS—Legislative officer who maintains order and controls access to the chamber at the direction of the presiding officer.

SPEAKER—Speaker of the House of Representatives; presides over the House. Elected, in effect, by the majority party in the House. Next in the line of succession to the Presidency after the Vice President.

SUSPEND THE RULES—A motion in the House intended to quickly bring a bill to a vote.

TABLE A BILL—A motion to, in effect, put a bill aside and thereby remove it from consideration, or “kill” it.

TELLER VOTE—A House vote in which members’ votes are counted “for” or “against” as representatives file past tellers in the front of the chamber. A count is taken, but there is not an official record of how each representative voted.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT—A timesaving procedure for non-controversial measures. Measures are adopted without a vote when a member simply says, “I ask unanimous consent for...” and states the proposal.

UNION CALENDAR—The calendar on which money bills are placed in order of the dates on which they are to be reported by committees.

WHIP—A legislator who is chosen to be assistant to the leader of the party in both the House and Senate.

(Adapted from the US Congress Handbook)

