

Telling Your Story

It's important to tell your story to our elected officials. They want to hear from you! Many elected officials do not know much about arthritis and we have to tell our stories to help educate them. It's important to let them know that kids get arthritis, too. Use the questions below to help tell your story.

How does arthritis make you feel?

How does arthritis affect your family?

What are you unable to do because of arthritis?

What do you want grownups to do about arthritis?

How to Write a Letter

Writing to your member of Congress is easy! Use the fill-in-the-blank below to begin writing your letter. If you need help, ask a parent.

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear <elected official's name>:

My name is <your name> and I am from <your city>. I am <your age> years old and I live with arthritis. Arthritis makes me feel _____.

I don't like _____ about arthritis. I wish adults would do _____ for arthritis.

Here is a picture of what it feels like to have arthritis:

Kids get arthritis, too! Please think about people with arthritis when you are considering laws that might affect kids with arthritis.

Sincerely,
<Your name>

Arthritis Foundation Advocacy

YES

YOU Can Do It!

**Advocacy
Toolkit for
Children**



Why Is Advocacy Important?

Advocacy means becoming a driver instead of a passenger. It means standing up and showing support for a cause you believe in. Advocacy is not just asking for something from your elected officials – it's developing a relationship with them and making sure they know about the challenges a person with arthritis faces every day, so when they vote on legislation, they'll be thinking about you and your story.

In order to be an Advocate for people with arthritis, you just have to develop the confidence to speak up for yourself and tell your personal story about living with arthritis, showing your elected officials how important arthritis is. You not only represent yourself as an Arthritis Foundation Advocate, but you also represent the more than 50 million adults and 300,000 children in the United States living with arthritis.

Family Activities

- **Attend Arthritis Foundation events in your community to spread the word.**
Go to your local Walk to Cure Arthritis or Jingle Bell Run event to spread the word about advocacy as well as fundraise!
- **Visit your state and federal elected officials.**
- **Attend the Arthritis Foundation's Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC.**
It includes a Kids' Summit where you'll meet other children with arthritis and learn more about advocacy. **For information, visit arthritis.org/advocacy.**
- **Share your story** with local councils, clubs or civic groups.

Advocacy 101

An elected official gets an idea of how to fix problems by talking to people like you. They then introduce a bill to change the law. Here's a look at how our government is organized.

