

EVERYDAY ADVOCACY

Small 'a' Advocacy

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Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

– Howard Zinn

Advocacy doesn't only happen in formal meetings or public campaigns. It happens every day, in the conversations you have, the relationships you build, and the ways you make your work visible to others. This is often called **small "a" advocacy** — the ongoing, informal actions that shape how people understand and value libraries.

These everyday moments are powerful. They build awareness, trust, and support over time, creating the foundation that makes more formal advocacy efforts possible.

Examples of Everyday Advocacy:

- Sharing stories about how your library supports your community, through everyday conversations or on social media.
- Building relationships within your organization and across your networks.
- Making intentional book recommendations with readers that help support Canadian authors, illustrators, and the Canadian publishing industry.
- Creating book displays that highlight current issues and library values (e.g., intellectual freedom).
- Planning or participating in programs tied to libraries, such as [Freedom to Read Week](#), [Dear School Library](#), or [Canadian School Library Day](#).
- Gently correcting misconceptions about libraries and their roles – using it as an opportunity to educate and shift perceptions about the library and library staff.
- Making your support visible by wearing [library-themed swag](#) (e.g., pins, apparel, stickers, and tote bags) that spark conversation.
- Joining and engaging with your professional library association. Your membership strengthens the association's collective voice in its advocacy efforts.

These actions may feel small, but they contribute to a larger, collective understanding of the value of libraries. Remember, *all* advocacy counts!

Getting Started

You don't need to be an expert or feel completely confident to practice everyday advocacy.

- Look for natural opportunities to share what you do and why it matters
- Use clear, accessible language to describe your work
- Share real examples and stories from your local context to illustrate impact
- Be consistent — small actions over time make a difference

Every conversation is an opportunity to advocate.



Dear School Library

Dear School Library is a storytelling campaign that invites people to share “love letters” to their school libraries, highlighting the lasting impact these spaces have had on their lives. By centring lived experiences, the campaign demonstrates how storytelling can be a powerful tool for library advocacy.

The Power of Stories

At the heart of effective advocacy are the stories we tell. Data and research is important, but stories help make it human, relatable, and memorable. By sharing real experiences, whether from your own work or from those you serve, you bring advocacy to life. Your stories can help build connection, deepen understanding, and stay with people long after the conversation has ended.

Storytelling can also invite people to reconnect with their own experiences of libraries. For many, libraries are tied to meaningful personal memories — a school library that sparked a love of reading, a space that offered comfort and belonging, or a place where learning felt possible.

These memories create an emotional connection that facts alone cannot. When people are reminded of what libraries have meant in their own lives, they are more likely to recognize their ongoing value and feel invested in their future.