

# Start Anywhere

## The Everyday Advocacy Challenge

Jenna Nemeč-Loise



*Everyday Advocacy empowers ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve youth and families. Each lighthearted column features easy-to-implement strategies*

*and techniques for asserting the transformative power of libraries both within communities and beyond them. Please contact **Jenna Nemeč-Loise** at [everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com](mailto:everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com) with comments and ideas for future topics.*

Great things don't always have to start at the beginning. Sometimes the most exciting things can start right smack in the middle.

For example, think of your favorite informational book for kids. If it's a great informational book (and I'll bet it is since you love it), you can open it up to any page, and *voilà!* You can dig right in because of all the text features available to guide you: Headings, captions, sidebars, photographs, and more. Because of its specialized design, any page in an informational book is an entry point and a prime opportunity for learning.

Now think of Everyday Advocacy like an informational book. You don't have to start with page one, and you don't have to move from beginning to end. Your "text features" include the Everyday Advocacy website ([www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy](http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy)) filled with resources to guide and support you. There's even an "appendix" of other Everyday Advocates ready to answer your questions and help deepen your engagement with any topic.

So are you ready to crack open an adventure?

Check out the Everyday Advocacy Challenge (EAC), your right-smack-in-the-middle entry point into learning, sharing, and making a difference for the youth and families you serve in your library community. Whether you're just dipping your toes or you're already an experienced advocate, the EAC is your ticket to Everyday Advocacy awesomeness.

You can start anywhere. Here's how!

### Everyday Advocacy Challenge Overview

Activate your inner Everyday Advocate and motivate your colleagues to do the same by volunteering to be a part of a fifteen-member EAC cohort convening in September, December, March, or June. Here's the scoop on what we'll ask of you:

1. Commit to completing four consecutive Take Action Tuesday challenges on a designated theme;
2. Collaborate with your EAC cohort over the four-week period, sharing successes and troubleshooting issues via ALA Connect (or its next iteration);
3. Write a post for the ALSC blog about your EAC experience; and
4. Contribute a reflection for an upcoming issue of the *Everyday Advocacy Matters* e-newsletter.

Interested? Submit the challenge web form ([www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/everyday-advocacy-challenge](http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/everyday-advocacy-challenge)), and we'll be in touch with all the details.

## Take Action Tuesday Challenges

Once you're confirmed as an EAC cohort member and we near the challenge launch date, we'll start planning the four Take Action Tuesday challenges you'll complete as part of the experience.

We want the EAC to be customized to your own and your cohort's growing skill sets, so we'll brainstorm entry points before we take the plunge together.

Here are a few sample prompts:

1. What advocacy topics would you like to tackle?
2. What new advocacy muscles would you like to flex?
3. What types of challenges would you like to design?

Using the feedback we receive from our planning prompts, we'll craft the Take Action Tuesday challenges that will guide our collaboration in the weeks to come.

## Online Collaboration

How do you create a meaningful collaborative experience with colleagues when you're in different parts of the country—or even the world? Online, baby!

Throughout the four-week EAC, we'll create an advocacy playground, sandbox, and safe space using ALA Connect (or its next iteration). On each Tuesday of the EAC, we'll post the weekly Take Action Tuesday challenge to our online community and ask everyone to participate in a lively discussion about the successes and/or difficulties they're facing.

Past cohort members have said that this collaboration was the best part of their EAC experience, and I'll bet it'll be yours, too.

The best part about the EAC online community? It's open to anyone who wants to follow or join it. Your participation can inspire other Everyday Advocates who aren't a part of the EAC but who may be interested in joining a future cohort. Nice, right?

## ALSC Blog Posts and Reflections

In addition to collaborating with EAC cohort members online, you'll be asked to write an ALSC blog post about one of the Take Action Tuesday challenges you've completed. There are no real guidelines; whatever you think will be most valuable to other Everyday Advocates is perfect. And brevity is A-OK! You can aim for two-hundred-fifty words or less. (Check out previous EAC blog posts by searching the Everyday Advocacy tag at [www.alsc.ala.org/blog](http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog)).

Finally, we'd like to celebrate your accomplishments by publishing a reflection on your EAC experience in an upcoming issue of the *Everyday Advocacy Matters* e-newsletter. Your piece will appear in the issue following your EAC participation (e.g., the October issue if you're part of the September cohort).

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## Take the Plunge

Summer's a busy time for everyone, but do yourself a favor: Take a few minutes now to mark your calendar for the next EAC, which will convene September 26–27, 2016. Fall is a great time to take the plunge into your Everyday Advocacy journey, but then again, so is winter, spring, or summer.

So no worries if you can't join us in September. There's always another EAC right around the corner. Remember, you can start anywhere, and we'll meet you in the middle. ☺

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