

How to advocate for Computer Science and AI education

90% of parents want their children to learn
CS or agree that schools should offer CS.
But only **25%** of principals say their schools
offer programming/coding classes.

- Gallup, 2016.



Awaken your inner advocate.

Many kids don't learn Computer Science (CS) and many schools don't offer classes because in many states CS is not a required course in K-12 public education. You can help change that and make CS available to all kids! Parents' opinions matter to schools, so know that you hold a lot of power when it comes to advocating for a better education for your children. The following page provides ideas for what you can do to advocate for more CS and AI learning opportunities at your school, in your community, and at the policy level.

You are not alone!

Fellow parents, caregivers, and community members can become champions for CS too! We all want the best education for the young people in our lives and agree that schools should ensure all children receive a quality CS and AI education to be prepared for college, careers, and beyond. Some parents are already active volunteers at school or serve a special cause in the community as a parent leader, PTA member, community advocate, promotora/o, etc. Learning about the need for greater access to CS and AI education can inform and contribute to these ongoing advocacy efforts. Parents like to hear and learn from other parents, so as a trusted messenger, you can do your part to share what you know.

Advocate for Computer Science (CS) & AI Education



First, find out what CS/AI learning experiences are offered at your school using the [CSforCA Equity Data Dashboard](#) or by inquiring with your teacher or principal.

at your school

- If there are CS classes, find out how accessible are they to all students:
 - How many classes are there? Do they fulfill any graduation or college requirements?
 - Who typically takes them and why? How do students find out about them and are they encouraged (or not) to take them? How can the school work to ensure all students learn CS?
 - Does the curriculum include real-world examples, AI, and ethics in computing?
 - What projects are done and how do they connect to students' lives and interests?
 - How are teachers prepared and supported?
- If there are no classes, consider what is needed to ensure all students learn CS:
 - What ways can CS be incorporated in the curriculum or offered outside of class time?
 - What resources are lacking: teachers, technology, time, funding, district support?
 - How can teachers be equipped and comfortable teaching about technology?
- Schedule time to talk with your principal or district leader to make your case for more CS education. Visit csforca.org/take-action/#make-the-case for advocacy tools such as a sample letter template, slidedeck, social media cards, [K-12 CS Standards](#), [K-12 CS Framework](#), [TeachAI](#), and [CS Equity Guide](#) for implementing CS learning in schools. See a sample letter in the [Appendix](#).
- If a CS course can't be offered, brainstorm ideas to incorporate CS aside from classes, such as: host a [Family Code Night](#) for families to learn about CS together, invite CS professionals or relevant alumni to speak at Career Week, ask a local high school robotics club to host an afterschool club for elementary students, ask a teacher to host a lunchtime or afterschool [Girls Who Code](#) club.
- Attend your local school board, School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), and District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) meetings, and provide the data on your school compared to others to bring attention to the need for more access to CS.
- Ask about funding for classes or resources through your Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) program, or research grants/sponsorships from local companies and nonprofit organizations.

in your community

- Contact local industry, nonprofits, out-of-school/informal learning organizations, NGOs, and colleges/universities to inquire if they can offer CS learning programs for kids, organize field trips, provide funding, donate prizes for fundraising efforts, sponsor or provide space for an event/family code night/hackathon, offer internships/mentorships/job shadowing, host a computing club, mentor a class, or provide professional development for teachers.

at the policy level

- Look for local- or state-level initiatives that support CS education at the policy level. For example, CSforCA is a statewide coalition of parents, teachers, school leaders, administrators, researchers, and policymakers all working towards bringing CS to all students in California. Sign up for the newsletter at csforca.org to get the latest CS education news and opportunities.