



Telling Your Story...

...about your experiences as a child care provider, early childhood teacher, or parent using child care
...about the importance of quality child care and early education to children and families

Everyone has a story to tell.

Personal stories are a very effective way to help legislators and policymakers understand how issues, policies and legislation affect real people in real ways.

Identify one aspect of your experiences that you can use to create a memorable verbal snapshot.

Choose one focus for your story. Don't try to tell your entire story. Including too much information and detail will make your story less effective and less likely to be remembered.

Have a clear message.

Always keep in mind the reason why you are telling your story. Make sure that there is a clear connection between your story and a current issue, policy or piece of legislation.

Keep your audience in mind.

Make sure that the message in your story is interesting and relevant to the audience who will hear it.

Share your passion.

The more expressive you are, the more you will engage your audience and the more compelling and effective your story will be. Use words and descriptions to help your audience feel like they are there with you in your story.

Plan, and then practice, practice, practice!

When speaking to policymakers and legislators, you typically have about **two or three minutes** in which to tell your story and communicate your message. Therefore, to be effective, you must plan what you will say and then practice saying it. Write yourself a script. Practice getting the words right and then practice adding expression and passion. Time yourself – make sure that you can speak clearly and at a reasonable pace and wrap up your story and message in the time you will have.

Resources:

Andresen, K, and M. Morehouse. 2007. 5 Elements of a Good Story. Network for Good Learning Center. <http://www.fundraising123.org/article/5-elements-good-story>

Andresen, K, and M. Morehouse. 2007. 7 Ways to Improve Your Storytelling. Network for Good Learning Center. <http://www.fundraising123.org/article/7-ways-improve-your-storytelling>