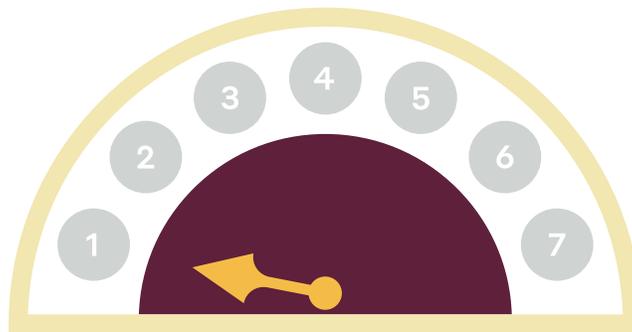


Engaging Policymakers

THE CHILD CARE ELEVATOR SPEECH

You find yourself in a situation where you have a short window of time to introduce yourself to an influential individual to discuss the importance of child care. How can you make the most effective and impactful use of your time? Tailor the format below to your time line—30 seconds to several minutes.



1. Introduce yourself.

2. Identify the problem.

3. Identify the solution.

4. Explain specifically and clearly how the individual can help.

5. Ask for a follow-up meeting and offer to be of assistance.

6. Leave behind your contact information (business card).

7. Follow up with a thank you and resources.

THE CHILD CARE MEETING FORMAT

You have successfully scheduled a meeting with someone who can influence child care policy. How do you format the meeting?

Before the meeting: Do your research on who you are talking to. Are they familiar with early childhood topics, or will you need to provide a basic overview? Have you met with them before, or do you have a personal connection you could bring up? What have they done in the past on this or other related topics you could discuss? Are they a supporter, or do they need to be convinced; what arguments or talking points will work best? Let your agenda reflect these realities, and ensure your talking points target what messages will resonate with them. Make sure to speak in general terms; do not assume they understand the jargon and acronyms the field recognizes.

During the meeting:

- Thank them for their time.
- Introduce yourself and your organization.
- Briefly explain why you requested the meeting.
- Review your priorities, the need, and your requests.
- Engage the policymaker on matters related to their priorities.
- Tell a story that connects your priorities, the policymaker's priorities or personal history, and your request.
- Ask if they have any questions you can help with.
- Offer to be a resource and ask to stay in touch.
- Offer to host the policymaker and staff at a site visit or at another in-person opportunity.
- Thank everyone in the room and leave printed materials behind.

After the meeting: Continue to cultivate the relationship. Send a follow-up email thanking them for their time and providing any requested details. Reach out when relevant information becomes available or with any opportunities to attend meetings or events that connect your priorities to the policymaker's interests or questions.

Site-visit invitations: If you invited the policymaker for a district site visit at a child care center or other early learning program, follow up on this to make it a reality. These visits are a wonderful way to get policymakers interested in your priorities and to understand how the programs work on the ground and impact families in their district or service area.