



Telling Your Story for a Public Policy Purpose

Family stories are critical to helping policymakers understand whether or not systems are working well, the impact they are having on families, and how systems can be improved. A good story to impact public policy identifies the issue, how your story relates to that issue, and your request for action to address that issue. This form provides you with a structure for telling your story and can help you prepare to share your story to improve public policy!

SECTION 1: My Issue

1. Briefly describe the situation that made you decide to take action. Explain what made you say, “Something has to be done.”

2. Was the situation related to:

| CHILD WELFARE | CHILD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH |
|---|--|
| Being accused of child neglect? | Lack of mental health services? |
| Being accused of child abuse? | Suspension of your child from school? |
| Losing custody of your child(ren)? | Involvement in juvenile justice |
| Not being able to get Family supports? | Delay in accessing DCBHS services? |
| How you were treated by DYFS? | Problems with mobile response? |
| How you were treated by the court? | Problems with the CMO? |
| Visitation issues? | Insufficient family support? |
| Raising a child in foster care? | Other: |
| Other? | |
| PREVENTION | SPECIAL NEEDS |
| Insufficient family supports available? | Inappropriate special education services? |
| How you were treated by the FSC? | Inappropriate early intervention services? |
| How you were treated by SBYS? | Lack of access to quality health care? |
| How you were treated by DV system? | Lack of access to healthcare financing? |
| How you were treated by the home visitor? | Lack of access to community services? |
| Other? | Other? |

3. Remember, you should focus on changing only one issue at a time. Look at the issues you marked. Which issue is most important to you?

SECTION 2: My Personal Story

Think about the following questions in light of your personal situation and the details that you want to share. Then, write your personal story. Remember, you will use this story when you're talking to people in person, as well as in e-mails, letters, etc. You should be able to tell your story in 5 minutes or less.

1. Describe who you are and where you are from. Include your name. If you're advocating on behalf another person, include his or her name as well.
2. Do you have a picture of yourself and your family that you are willing to share?
3. Describe the situation that you want changed. What is happening? What is working? What needs to change?
4. What could be done to improve the situation?
5. What makes this situation memorable for a policymaker?

I have chosen to describe this situation in my story:

My story:

SECTION 3: My Request for Action

Describe in 30 words or less what you would like the policymaker to do:

I am asking you to enforce your own policy that requires that I have more family time with my child who is the custody of the state.

I am asking you to establish a Statewide Family Council to get direct input from parents about what is happening within DCF from a parent perspective.

My request:

Tell Your Story

Here's a quick outline that can help you tell your story in a clear and concise way. When you tell your story, speak (or write) from your heart!

1. **Introduce your story.** (2-3 sentences). Set the stage for your story by providing:
 - Your full name (even if you've been introduced)
 - City or town of residence
 - Name and ages of the people in your story

Then state your main message. This tells them why you are about to tell them this story!

2. **Tell your story – Challenge, Action, Result** (4-8 sentences)
 - Explain the challenge that you face.
 - Explain the action that would help you address that challenge.
 - Tell what kind of result could be achieved due to the action.
3. **Wrap it up!** (3-5 sentences)
 - Tell how your result would benefit other families, the community, and the state
 - State your main message again.
 - Tell them what you want them to do about it.
 - Say thank you!

If you need more help, feel free to contact us at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network!.

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