



Early Childhood Legislative Messaging Campaign



Stories:

- ❖ reveal the details and the impact of systems on the daily lives of families and children.
- ❖ are a powerful way to develop relationships among parents, professionals and policymakers.
- ❖ help people connect
- ❖ are what connect us to our work and to each other in meaningful ways. They deepen our understanding of individual and shared experiences.
- ❖ spur change in systems that seem impossible to understand.



Purpose

- The goal of this project is to connect with local legislators and share the value of early childhood programming in North Dakota through stories and experiences.
- The goal is to highlight a positive experience a family had with a state, local or community program
 - (i.e. their local Head Start, Family Voices of North Dakota or Child Care Resource and Referral program).



Introduction

- Early Childhood Legislative Messaging project sponsored by the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA).
- The HNDECA is an entity that brings together early childhood professionals, educators, health professionals, businesses, community leaders and parents from around North Dakota to coordinate efforts to support families and communities in their development of healthy children who are ready to learn.
- HNDECA is made up of about 65 (list included in packet).



The Letter

- The enclosed step-by-step instructions will serve as a “help packet” for you in drafting your story. The story should be brief, focusing on one event, experience, or person that had a positive impact on the child’s or family’s life.
- Willing to share a picture of the family or child on the front of the card along with your letter to the legislator.



Step 1 – Tell Your Story

- ❖ Highlight a positive experience the family had with a state, local or community program.
- ❖ Raise awareness about the positive impact that early childhood programs are making on North Dakota families.
- ❖ Should reveal the details and the impact of systems on the daily lives of families and children.
- ❖ Deepen our understanding of individual and shared experiences.



Make sure your story has a:

- **Beginning:** Where does the story take place? Who are the important people? When does the story take place?
- **Middle:** What happened first, second, third? What was the major problem? What were some of the key feelings elicited?
- **End:** What happened to conclude the story? How was the conflict or problem resolved? What was the key theme you learned? What is the key theme that you want your legislator to understand?



Key Reminders

- Focus on one example, situation and/or experience.
- Keep it short: 1 to 2 pages. Practice writing your letter on plain paper. Use the included stationary for your final document.
- Have a beginning and an end.
- **Do not lobby/advocate for any particular legislation; just tell your story.**
- Once it is complete e-mail, or mail the letter, picture & release form to your HNDECA liaison.
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Step 2 – Include a picture

- Instructions for sharing a 4 x 6 inch picture of your child or your family to go along with your story.
- Signed release form: Authorization to use Written Materials/Photographs.

If you are not able to take a picture, please contact your liaison and she/he can help.



Step 3 – Send your story, picture and signed release form

- Instructions for what to do with your picture and your story once they are complete.

- **Please contact or send to the following by: (DUE DATE)**

Name:

Organization:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call.



**Thank you for your
support in this
important
Early Childhood
Messaging Campaign!!**