

# STORYTELLING

# TOOLKIT





# WHY TELL STORIES?

**Storytelling is a powerful tool.** It can be used to share information, raise awareness, promote effective practices, empower stakeholders to advocate and contribute to sustainability efforts. And when groups of people are able to narrate a shared experience - the collective impact of that message is amplified. This toolkit is intended to support grantees in developing and sharing stories of successes and lessons learned while implementing Community Innovation Zones (CIZ). Think about what story you would like to tell. What accomplishment would you like to share? Is there a lesson learned that would be beneficial for others to hear?



## 6 BUILDING BLOCKS OF STORYTELLING

Consider the following steps when developing your story in order to convey a clear and concise message in a powerful, compelling way.

- STEP 1 THE IMPACT**  
There should always be a desired impact of your stories. What measurable outcome would make your storytelling initiative successful? What end result is most important? What specific action do you want your audience to take? Determine the purpose to help frame your storytelling.
- STEP 2 EFFECTIVE CHARACTER**  
Most stories contain a single, compelling character that is relatable to the audience and who is comfortable relaying specific details, memories and experiences. This character doesn't always have to be a child or family – it could a staff member, volunteer, board member, or even a member of the larger community. Who is going to be the focal character in your story?
- STEP 3 TRAJECTORY**  
Effective stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Stories should chronicle something that happens - an experience, a journey, a success, a transformation, a discovery, a lesson learned, showcasing an impact that your organization has had. What do you want to highlight in your story? Make sure to present a clear, concise story about a single issue.
- STEP 4 AUTHENTICITY**  
Stories should also show - rather than just tell - the audience about the character's journey, using rich details and featuring the character's own voice. Authenticity comes down to choosing the right character and knowing the right details to emphasize.
- STEP 5 ACTION-ORIENTED EMOTIONS**  
Stories should convey emotions that move people to act, and marry these with clear, easy-to-find pathways to get them to those desired actions - remember your desired impact for the story!
- STEP 6 A HOOK**  
Stories should capture the audience's attention as quickly as possible. A hook provides a reason to care and answers the following questions immediately... Whose story is it? What's happening? What's at stake?

## OTHER STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER...

**IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE.** Stories should be crafted and delivered differently based on your audience. Consider how your audience will perceive the message.

**KEEP MESSAGES SIMPLE AND CONCISE.** Work to highlight your main ideas – less is more!

**USE PLAIN LANGUAGE.** Avoid jargon and acronyms whenever possible.

**ADD DATA.** Using high-quality data that is reliable and trustworthy can strengthen your message.

**INCLUDE IMAGES.** Pictures visually reinforce your message and grab the attention of your audience.

**SEE RESOURCES & TOOLS SECTION FOR 6 BUILDING BLOCKS OF STORYTELLING TEMPLATE**

### Example of Storytelling Initiative



[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

## DELIVERING YOUR STORY

**Compelling stories can be told across a variety of different media.** While the building blocks of storytelling can help to develop the content of your story, choosing the right delivery approach can help to ensure your story has the intended impact. Grantees can strategically make use of a variety of communication approaches to tell stories of innovations, successes, and lessons learned through the PA CIZ grant work.

The following sections of the toolkit will provide you with advice, tips and best practices on using social media, visual storytelling, and interviews to offer support in sharing your most pressing stories.

### SOCIAL MEDIA (Page 3)



Social media allows for a way to diversify communication by using various approaches to share multiple types of information with different audiences of interest. You have many channels to choose from – such as Twitter, Facebook, Digital Photo Sharing (like Instagram), Blogging, etc. – when deciding how to distribute your stories.

### VISUAL STORYTELLING (Page 10)



Visual storytelling can be used to tell a story quickly with impact. Powerful visuals are helpful in evoking emotions and grabbing the attention of your audience. One method is by using a PechaKucha approach, which is a quick, simple presentation format of a slide show with a set timeline that encourages presentations to be concise and engaging.

### INTERVIEWS (Page 15)



Interviews can be an effective way of gathering stories to reinforce your message. Conducting interviews with colleagues, families, and other key stakeholders is a useful way to begin building a repository of compelling stories to illustrate the underlying processes involved in your work or even to demonstrate impact. StoryCorps-inspired interviews offer an approach to record such experiences and successes in implementing your early learning work.



# SOCIAL MEDIA – WHY DO IT?

**Social media fosters communication.** Social media is an ever-present and increasingly popular way to connect with others. What distinguishes social media from other storytelling platforms is that grantees can use it to:

- Garner attention from a wider, more diverse audience at a faster pace
- Gather direct feedback and reactions from shared stories in real time
- Connect with others who have similar stories through the use of hashtags
- Target specific audiences based on their location

## WHAT TOOLS COULD I USE?

### SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The following platforms can be used to communicate messages to diverse audiences. Use this information to determine how to format and share messages through each platform.

#### TWITTER



##### Key Features

- 140 characters or less
- Powered by searchable / connected hashtags
- Drives people to external sites
- User is more in control of how to view tweets

##### Benefits

- Text-based (for easy on-the-go updating)
- Real-time engagement opportunities
- Hashtags are easy to create
- Trending topics are easy to tap into when relevant
- Fast-paced & works well with live events
- Increasingly moving towards visual features

#### FACEBOOK



##### Key Features

- Emphasis on visuals (photos and videos)
- Hashtags allow for content & conversation aggregation
- Facebook insights offers strong snapshot of user demographics & behavior

##### Benefits

- Go-to source of information for significant portion of key audience
- Rewards quality content (visuals, video) with higher engagement
- Analytics help take guesswork out of what types of content resonate and what times to post
- Relatively inexpensive ads and promoted content

#### INSTAGRAM



##### Key Features

- Visual storytelling with photos and short videos
- Fully integrated with Facebook, Twitter and other major platforms
- Unlimited photo uploads
- Engagement through likes and comments

##### Benefits

- Allows for powerful showing (rather than telling) of impact
- Use of filters can elevate the quality of images
- On-the-go posting via mobile phone is good for behind the scenes stories and events

#### BLOGS



##### Key Features

- A hub for content that can be shared on other platforms (Facebook, Twitter, newsletter, etc.)
- Flexible platform allows authors to pull in other types of content (photos, videos, text, audio, etc.)

##### Benefits

- Primary way to position an organization, school or individual as a thought leader
- Easy to integrate a blog into a website
- Allows for versatile content
- Good for search engine optimization (making blog position higher in search results)
- Trustworthy source of content

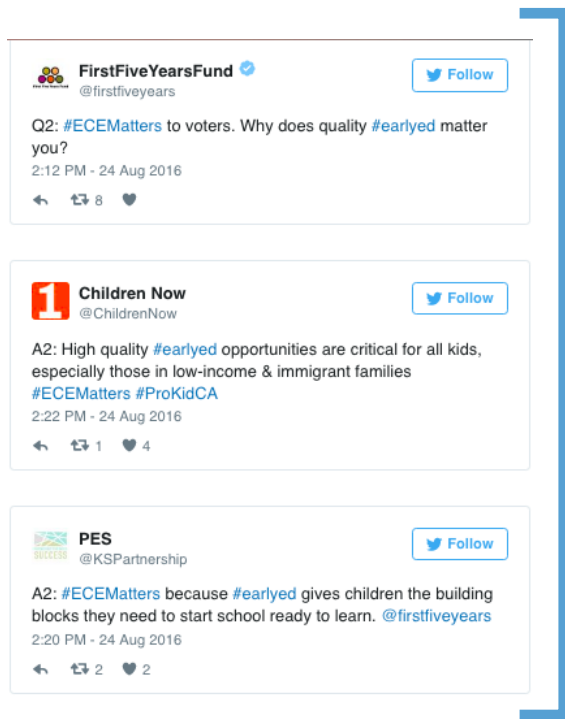
# HOW DO I USE THEM?

Using the 6 Building Blocks of Storytelling, stories and messages can be framed on respective social media platforms – each providing for unique ways to share multiple types of information with different audiences. The following section highlights a few key tips and real-world examples for using each of the platforms to support effective storytelling.

## TWITTER

- Twitter uses only 140 characters per tweets, however stories can also be told using multiple tweets.
- Twitter uses #hashtags (#ece for early childhood education), so people can locate related conversations and track the source of information. Consider creating a hashtag specific to your storytelling effort, like #ECEmatters
- Twitter has a feature (@MomsRising) where users can directly tag other people, schools, and organizations to spread the message. Think about who is involved in your story or who you want to directly share it with (e.g., families, community leaders, businesses, policymakers, etc.) and use the @ feature to tag them in your tweet.
- Use url shorteners, like bit.ly or ow.ly, instead of posting long urls that distract users away from the message.
- Tweet about your stories while participating in a “Twitter chat”, which is where a structured conversation held between various people/organizations. You can join in on existing events or even host a chat of your own.

## USE IMAGES & HASHTAGS TO EXPAND YOUR REACH



## SUPPORT STORY COLLECTION EFFORTS ON TWITTER



Are you raising #bilingualkids or #multilingual kids? We'd love to hear your story! [action.momsrising.org/survey/DLL\\_Sto...](http://action.momsrising.org/survey/DLL_Sto...) #EarlyEdChat

TWITTER CHATS CAN PROMOTE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION & STRATEGY SHARING BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS

## FACEBOOK

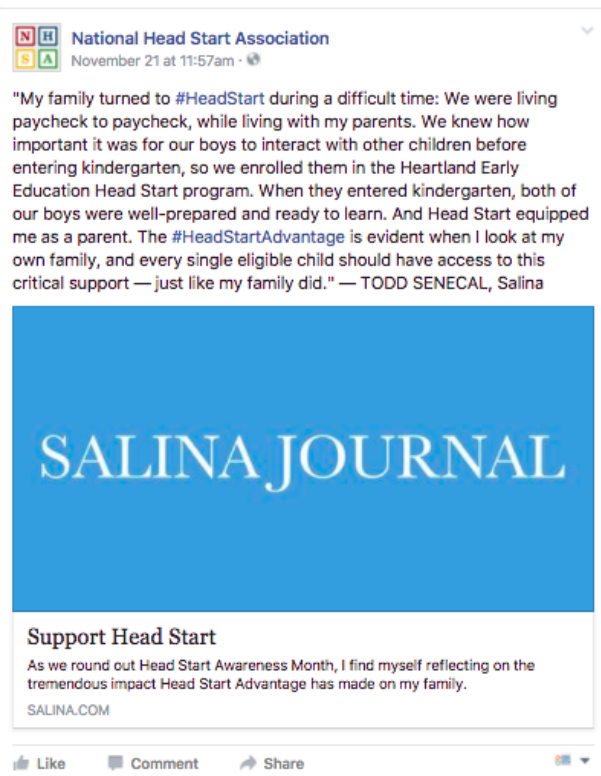
- Facebook allows for more text and characters in a post, so longer stories can be shared in one post.
- Posts can be used to connect stories to issues that are relevant to the surrounding community.
- Facebook has “like, share, and comment” options so users can interact with shared stories in multiple ways.
- Offer helpful links, such as to your organization’s website, program overviews and steps on how viewers can get involved in amplifying your story or message.
- Facebook users are able to post multiple photos that are automatically saved into a photo album to enhance storytelling.

## USE MULTIPLE PHOTOS IN ONE POST TO SHARE THE HAPPENINGS OF AN EVENT



Raising A Reader National  
December 6 at 12:29pm · 🌐

Thank you to the generous team ARM for providing STEM programming and books to children in San Jose! #internationalvolunteerday



## SHARE COMPELLING EXCERPTS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION & DRAW THE AUDIENCE TO THE LINK & THE REST OF THE STORY

### USERS CAN INTERACT WITH YOUR POSTS



LIKE



COMMENT



LOVE



FORWARD

AND MORE...



## INSTAGRAM

- Instagram is driven by images and brief videos, but users can share stories to contextualize the images and videos shared. Use #hashtags, like with Twitter, to link content and create a consistent theme.
- Captions don't always have to be short and can share more detailed stories – like short blurbs to spotlight parent ambassadors. (Example: see National Geographic's IG @natgeo to get a sense of how they tell their stories.)
- Shorter captions can be used to announce community events by posting flyers or posting what your organization is up to with a workday candid. Work to diversify photos and perspectives (e.g., behind the scenes, promotional, day in the life, etc.), so that multiple voices are captured.
- Instagram is linked to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms, so users can post one time to Instagram and the app will post to other social media platforms automatically.
- URLs to other content (e.g., blogs on your website) must be shared via profiles on Instagram – a little different than with other platforms.
- Instagram uses photo-editing software (filters) to support users in improving the quality of the photo. Take advantage of visual opportunities – you can also work to share images overlaid with calls-to-action in text, or videos to enhance your story.

## VIDEO CAN HELP SHARE ELEMENTS OF YOUR STORY

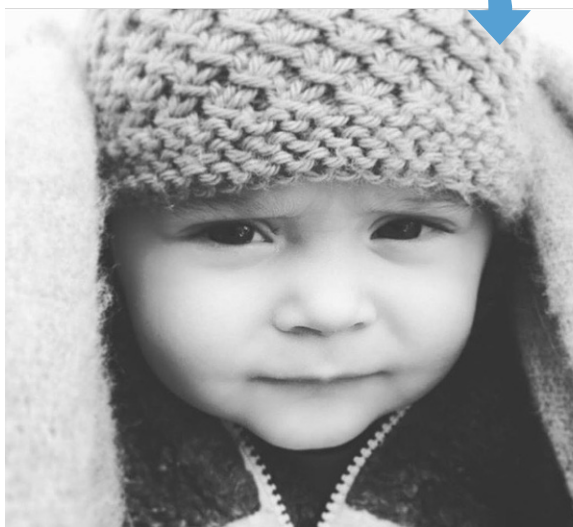


Imaginationplaygro...  
12 views 2h

Imaginationplayground According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, Play is essential to children's development because it contributes to their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being. For detailed information on the benefits of play, visit [www.ImaginationPlayground.com](http://www.ImaginationPlayground.com)

#ChildrensMusuem #PowerOfPlay #PlayMatters #Play2Learn #UnstructuredPlay #LoosePartsPlay #ChildDirected #STEM #EarlyEd #HandsOnLearning #Tinkering #ECE #ChildDevelopment

## FILTERS CAN ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE PHOTO



chorusandclouds  
Chorus and Clouds

72 likes 2d

chorusandclouds .  
.  
.  
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#reggioinspired #educator #ece #growthanddevelopment #playbased #playmatters #letthemplay #explore #creativeexplorations #children #workspace #wearlocal #mountpleasant #littleshop #instagood #musiceducation #creativeexplorations #vancity #newschool #familycentered #families #modernfamilies #loveoflearning #earlyyears #ece #musicandmovement #childhood #yvramilies #kidsclasses

looveletters #signlanguage #ASLforyoungchildren #babysigning #signingforbabies #americansignlanguage costarthub f4f @costarthub

**POST TO INSTAGRAM**

**THEN YOU CAN AUTOMATICALLY POST TO OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA**

## BLOGS

- Blogs mostly have unlimited space for text, photos, and video, therefore this platform can be used to tell a complete story, or a series of stories.
- Blogs can be posted once, and continuously shared as a link in Facebook, Twitter, and other social media posts.
- Blogs should have an attention-grabbing title to draw users into reading the story.

## MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES CAN BE USED TO TELL A STORY



BLOG | May 24, 2018

### Preschool Reflections

A preschool teacher asked the families of her preK-4 program to reflect on their children's experiences before the end of the school year. Read what they had to say, as well as the teacher's own observations about the impact of preschool learning.

Author by: Jenny Levinson

## CURRENT, RELEVANT EVENTS CAN ACT AS A BACKDROP FOR YOUR STORY



### NBCDI Announces the Release of Its New Policy Brief Supporting Racial Equity in State Child Care and Early Learning Systems

In November 2014, with broad bipartisan support, Congress reauthorized the Child Care Development Grant Block Grant Act (CCDBG), the major federal child care program, for the first time since 1996. The new law makes significant advances to support early learning and financial security for families and children.

## BLOGS ALLOW FOR STORIES TO BE TOLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MANY DIFFERENT AUTHORS



# SOCIAL MEDIA QUICK TIPS

- **Communication is two-way - post often, but also listen and engage**
- **Deciding on a regularly scheduled day/time to post will make it consistent for your audience, but also more manageable to incorporate into your daily routine**
- **Make sure to check out your social media analytics to understand the best time to share on each platform and when it's time to stop sharing content. If you notice the optimal posting time for your audience is around lunch time, make sure to post then to ensure they have something consistent to look forward to. And if a post is performing well, make sure to bring it back and share it again on another platform or on the same platform at a later time.**
- **Social media is largely about quality and not quantity. It can be important to schedule sharing your content to make sure you are not overwhelming followers, subscribers, etc. with multiple postings on all platforms at the same time. Services, like Hootsuite, Twittimer and CoSchedule, are useful tools in pacing the delivery of stories being shared and to save time. Or even a simple social media calendar like the one below can be helpful.**
- **Remember to mix up your publishing frequency to not only share your own content, but retweet or repost relevant content and messages from others.**
- **Get social! When someone reaches out or comments on a post, it may be useful to have a plan on how to respond and/or engage in conversations with your social media community.**

# VISUAL STORYTELLING

ADVICE, TIPS &  
BEST PRACTICES



# VISUAL STORYTELLING - WHY DO IT?

**A picture is worth a thousand words.** This is especially true when it comes to storytelling. Humans are biologically wired for visual content with our brains being able to process images 60,000x faster than text. Big, bold images can be used to tell stories with impact and emotion, and by incorporating visual stimuli the flow of information is quickly sent to the audience.

Although visuals can help to tell stories quickly, they have to be the right images. When a visual is a powerful one, the effect of the story can be magnified.

**“Powerful visuals can evoke deeper emotions and result in a deeper engagement with your content.”**

Thanks to online photo libraries, like iStock and Flickr, high-quality images are easy to obtain. However, it may be important to note that using real, candid images that capture your story or that further illustrate your message can be even more powerful in connecting with your audience.

As you use the 6 Building Blocks of Storytelling to frame your story, it may be helpful to also consider – what visuals could I use to enhance my storytelling and bring my message to life?



**90%**  
of information  
transmitted to  
the brain is visual

**THE EYES** are a  
physical extension  
of the brain



**HALF OF THE BRAIN** is  
dedicated to visual function



**65%** of the population  
are visual learners

**SEE!** An infographic helps us to  
visualize & understand information!

## WHAT TOOLS COULD I USE?

### PechaKucha Facts

This presentation format, devised in 2003 by Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham of Tokyo's Klein-Dothan Architecture, was a way to attract people to their experimental event space. “PechaKucha Nights” allowed for young designers to meet, show their work, and effectively exchange ideas. Now events are being held in over 900 cities worldwide.

Instagram offers a platform for visual storytelling through virtual sharing of photos and short videos (See Social Media section for more information). Another option for visual storytelling that is growing in popularity is the PechaKucha presentation format.

PechaKucha (which means “Chit Chat” in Japanese) is a simple presentation style where 20 slides (images) are shown for 20 seconds each. The images advance automatically, and presenters talk along with the images. The goal of a PechaKucha is to tell a story through pictures in a way that is both compelling and concise. Watch a presentation [here](#) on the PA CIZ effort or visit [pechakucha.org](http://pechakucha.org) for more examples and information.

# HOW DO I USE THEM?

For helpful advice, tips, and best practices in using Instagram, be sure to check out the Social Media section of the toolkit. For using the PechaKucha presentation format, we have put together a set of tips in this section to hopefully act as a guide to support you in using this approach to tell the stories encountered with implementing PA CIZ work in a powerful, compelling way. We have organized these tips into three buckets – planning, designing, and delivering a PechaKucha.



**PLANNING**



**DESIGNING**



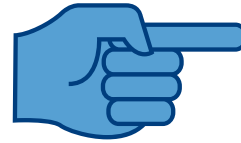
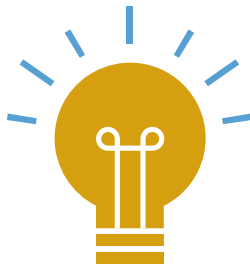
**DELIVERING**

## PLANNING A PECHAKUCHA

- When you start planning a PechaKucha, one of the best things to do is to watch some actual PechaKucha presentations. You can visit [pechakucha.org](http://pechakucha.org) to view a wide selection in their online library. Watching a few examples might help to spark some ideas for what you could do when creating your own presentation.
- As discussed before, it is important to first develop your story using the 6 Building Blocks of Storytelling. What impact do you want your story to have? What is the key message you want to highlight? Who is going to be the focal character in your story? What data do you have to support your story? Once decided, you can work to build your presentation and talking points around this frame.
- Keeping it simple is key. Try not to cram too much into your presentation. Those that do often find themselves having to talk rapidly to try to fit everything in. Less is definitely more in this situation. Remember to keep your presentation simple and within the frame of your story.
- Since the PechaKucha format is so tightly structured, it is also very helpful to plan out exactly what you are going to say. It is very difficult to wing it with this type of presentation - 20 seconds per slide doesn't leave much room to ad lib. You could start with a simple table to outline slide by slide what images you plan to include along with your talking points. **SEE RESOURCES & TOOLS SECTION FOR PECHAKUCHA PLANNING TEMPLATE.**
- There are of course a variety of ways to get organized outside of using a table. Filling in presenter notes inside of Keynote or PowerPoint programs...index cards...butcher paper...sticky notes... whatever method works best for you.
- The overall goal is to hone your story to make sure it fits within this short presentation time. 20 seconds for each slide flies by faster than you would expect. You can work to tweak your outline. Remove what is not required; combine some parts of the outline into one slide; or divide others as necessary.

## DESIGNING A PECHAKUCHA

- After you finish outlining the content, the next phase is to start designing your actual slides. To begin, it is helpful to make the presentation graphics heavy. Add images to your presentation that are relevant to your story. Pictures can help to visually reinforce your message and grab the attention of your audience.



- If you decide to use text on the slide, try to keep it short and simple. Work to just highlight the main ideas. Most often, your text content will be restricted to your slide titles. Long passages are often distracting and encourage your audience to read rather than listen to what you are sharing. The most successful PechaKuchas use very little, if any text.
- Animation and transitions can be an engaging addition to your presentation. Keynote, PowerPoint and other presentation software can offer various options to bring text to life. Keep in mind that words flying, swiping, or swirling could potentially be distracting while you are delivering your story. You must decide whether animation will add value to your slide, or otherwise.

## DELIVERING A PECHAKUCHA

- At the end of the design process, you should end up with 20 slides. Now time to review... play and watch your slides. Do the slides build up well to convey your story? If you feel the answer is no, then you should go back and edit the content and sequencing of your slides until the flow of your story works to clearly convey your message.
- Practice your presentation. The flow of each PechaKucha performance is very quick. Even with a condensed outline, you may find it to be too much. You may need to take some words out or rephrase a statement to make sure you stick to the 20 second mark. Being in sync with your slides may take repeated practice, but is key to a successful PechaKucha presentation.
- Recording PechaKuchas can be a useful alternative to share your story through social media, on a website, or through any other method where an in person presentation is not feasible. Again Keynote and PowerPoint are both great options to both create and record your PechaKuchas. You can use settings in the software to advance slides automatically and audio record your presentation. Links to step-by-step tutorials have been included below for additional support.



## KEYNOTE TUTORIALS

Need help creating a PechaKucha in Keynote?  
[Get help here!](#)

Need help recording in Keynote? [Get help here!](#)



## POWERPOINT TUTORIALS

Need help creating a PechaKucha in PowerPoint?  
[Get help here!](#)

Need help recording in PowerPoint? [Get help here!](#)

## VISUAL STORYTELLING QUICK TIPS

- Keep messages simple and concise.
- Outline your presentation beforehand to plan talking point and time your slides.
- Use powerful, relevant images to reinforce your message and limit use of text on slides.
- Decide whether animation and transitions either add value or are a distraction.
- Review content and sequencing of slides until the flow clearly conveys your message.
- Practice delivering your PechaKucha in real-time.



# INTERVIEWS

## ADVICE, TIPS & BEST PRACTICES



# INTERVIEWS – WHY DO IT?

**People connect best with people.** Stories that emphasize successes, challenges, and the overcoming of obstacles are examples of how to achieve this. The most powerful stories are known to elicit emotions that move people to act. By using interviewing methods, personal stories can be captured that put a “face” to your work and encourage your audience to form a deeper connection with the subject matter.

Conducting interviews with colleagues, families, and other key stakeholders in the community is a useful way to begin building a repository of compelling stories to illustrate the underlying processes involved in your work or even to demonstrate impact.

## WHAT TOOLS COULD I USE?

The StoryCorps model offers an effective approach to capture stories through interviewing. The StoryCorps interview model fosters storytelling by establishing a space for two people who know each other to speak for 40 uninterrupted minutes about a common subject matter – in this case your PA CIZ work. Because every StoryCorps interview is recorded, it can be shared with families, early childhood professionals, and other leaders in your community through various means.

[Listen to a series of interviews here](#) sharing stories about early learning work that has occurred through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge or visit [storycorps.org](http://storycorps.org) for more examples and information.

### StoryCorps Facts

StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind. Since 2003, StoryCorps has collected and archived more than 50,000 interviews from more than 80,000 participants. StoryCorps interviews usually take place between two people - they can be friends, family, or mere acquaintances. A trained facilitator guides participants through the interview process. Segments of select interviews have aired nationally on NPR's Morning Edition and are posted on the StoryCorps website.

## HOW DO I USE THEM?

Below you will find a set of tips (adapted from the StoryCorps Toolkit for Success) to support you in using interviewing techniques to collect meaningful stories reflecting the implementation and impact of your PA CIZ work. The tips will take you through getting started with the interviewing process, to interviewing, and then share a few helpful strategies in sharing your stories with a wider audience.

## GETTING STARTED



### **Choose eager participants.**

Sometimes getting people to feel comfortable participating in an interview to share their story can be challenging. The interview process might initially seem overwhelming based on the unknown. A quick fix to help get the ball rolling may be to first choose participants who are engaged and motivated to be a part of the process. Then, those who might need a little more convincing can benefit from seeing the success of your first interviews.



### **Give yourself plenty of time to prepare.**

Becoming familiar with the entire process can be beneficial to ensure the interview runs smoothly. Take some time to learn how to operate the recording equipment, try out different recording spaces, and finalize any other important logistics.



### **Set up and test the equipment.**

Be sure to set up your equipment and check the sound before the interview. As a way to test your equipment, record someone answering a few prompts, such as, “Tell me what you had for breakfast.” Stop recording and then listen to the test recording to determine if everything is working and that the sound is clear. If you don’t have access to recording equipment, there are a variety of free audio recording apps (such as the StoryCorps app) where you can use a mobile device to support your efforts.



### **Establish an interview model.**

There is no right or wrong way to conduct an interview. At the same time, it may be helpful to establish interview roles so that your interviewees have a general idea of what to expect. With the StoryCorps model, they use the following terms to describe the interview roles:

- **Participants:** The people participating in the interview.
- **Storyteller:** The person answering questions and telling stories during the interview.
- **Interviewer:** The person who asks most of the questions during the interview.
- **Facilitator:** Optional role. This can be a person who is present during the interview who can help to move the conversation forward when needed.



### **Create a list of questions.**

Preparing questions ahead of time can greatly improve the quality of your interviews. Below are examples of some questions that could help spark a conversation and encourage storytelling around your PA CIZ work.

- How did you become involved in the PA CIZ work?
- What was it like to be a part of the PA CIZ grant process?
- What is your biggest success? What are you the most proud of?
- What were the biggest challenges you faced?
- What is your biggest “take away” or lesson learned?
- What was the one thing that you feel had the biggest influence on your work and/or the progress made in your community?



### **Choose an interview location.**

In general, a small room with a door that can comfortably seat two to three people may be ideal. When choosing this location, be sure to pick the quietest place possible to reduce the potential for background noise when recording. A carpeted room can help to muffle sounds, while some places to avoid may be walkways or places where people gather. Also, take a little time to listen in advance to ensure there is nothing in the space that may make noise, like buzzing lights, ticking clocks, etc. You could take extra steps to make the room warm and inviting by lowering the lights or finding comfy chairs. Often the most minor adjustments can enhance the participants’ comfort level and the sound quality of the recording immensely. StoryCorps offers a few tips on how to create your own version of a studio.

## INTERVIEWING

**Begin the conversation.** Start the interview with having each participant share identifying information, such as name, date, position title or relationship to the organization. For example, *“My name is Jane Smith, I am the Director of the Early Childhood Department at Whoville School District. I am sitting with my colleague, John Doe, the Family Engagement Specialist for the District.”*

**Ask open-ended questions.** From your list of questions, choose the first to get you started. You will want to make sure these questions are more open-ended so they don’t just lead to yes or no answers. This will allow the interviewee to steer the conversation and highlight the stories that are most important to them. Questions such as these often start with phrases such as: “Tell me about...” or “How did you feel when...”

**Include closing questions.** As you near the end of the interview, it is helpful to close with reflective questions as time wraps up. Some examples might include:

- What moment would you like to relive?
- What are your hopes for the future?
- What advice would you give to others?

**Wrap it up.** For the StoryCorp model, they have found that 40 minutes is usually a good length of time for an interview, although some may run longer or shorter depending on the participant (or based on the length of time you are able to accommodate). Before you turn off the recorder, you may want to ask the interviewee if there is anything else he or she wants to talk about. Thanking interviewees can also go a long way to express your gratitude for their participation – opening up to share personal information while being recorded can be challenging for some. Once the recording is finished, it can be helpful to share a copy of the interview or instructions on how they can access their recording in the future to commemorate their participation.

## SHARING

**Editing full-length interviews.** By editing interviews to more manageable audio clips, stories can be told and shared in a more concise and meaningful way. Intentional editing can also help to highlight specific issues or successes that further support your message or intent for storytelling. StoryCorps strongly recommends that all interview segments be:

- Faithful to the overall tone of the conversation and representative of the substance and feel of the interview;
- Made available in a non-downloadable format;
- Not more than eight minutes in length (most StoryCorps segments are less than three minutes);
- Cohesive, telling a particular story or sticking to a defined theme;
- Presented in a manner that shows care and an intent to honor the source material; and
- Truthful (they suggest that you verify any hard facts in the segment).

**Host a listening event.** A listening event (where you play a portion of your collected interviews) can be a great way to bring together families, colleagues, and other stakeholders in the community to specifically listen to inspiring stories of your PA CIZ work. Projecting photos of the interviewees or other powerful images can be a nice addition to further portray your message. In general, this event can be a helpful platform to share your work in the community from various perspectives, highlight effective strategies or important lessons learned with other organizations implementing similar work, and even demonstrating your impact to contribute to funding and sustainability efforts.

**Play interviews at other events.** Although listening events can be an effective strategy for sharing your collected stories, interviews can also be incorporated into existing events. Are you presenting at an upcoming conference? Is there a board or town hall meeting you are attending? Do you have an upcoming visit with a local policymaker? Integrating audio from interviews can be a great way to share and raise awareness about your work using multiple voices in a more personal, authentic way.

**Use different media resources.** Interview clips can be shared through various media platforms. For example, you can use the stories you collected as the subject matter of a post on Facebook or Twitter, or even as the main content for a blog on your website. Photos from your recording days with links to the audio recordings can also be used to enhance your marketing and communications efforts, such as in brochures, newsletters, and flyers.

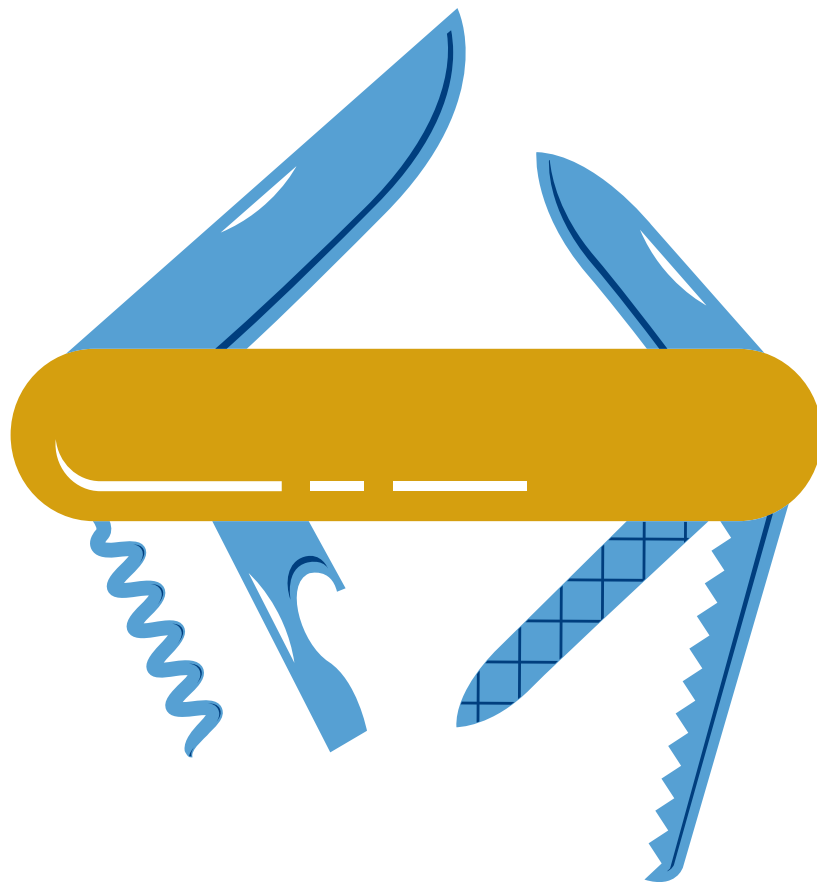
**StoryCorps has also developed a resource guide that provides additional information about strategies to share your interviews.**

## INTERVIEW QUICK TIPS

*Below are some more helpful tips provided by StoryCorps to keep in mind when conducting an interview.*

- Before each interview, consider asking your participants if there's anything they do or don't want to talk about. This is a great opportunity to remind interviewees that they are in control of their own stories and that you're there to listen.
- Be aware of your body language throughout the interview. Showing participants that you're genuinely interested helps them open up and makes them feel confident enough to indulge in the details.
- Keep in mind that future listeners may not be familiar with specific people and places you mention. Set up context and background for the interview where needed with questions such as "How did you get there?" or "Why was this such a big influence?"
- Questions that encourage vivid details can be surprising and make the interview special. Good examples include questions like, "Can you paint a picture in words of...?" or "What are some images that stand out when you think about...?"
- Be prepared to ask follow-up questions or veer from your planned question list if you're curious about something. You may hear stories you've never heard before.
- Think of your interview as a conversation. While rehearsing or writing out your questions may help in preparing for your interview, we also recommend thinking of this as a time to have a meaningful conversation. Relax and let your words come naturally.
- Don't hesitate to contribute a favorite story about the interviewee or memories you share together as you go along. This interview can be a time to share with your interview partner a meaningful experience you have had together.
- Remember that the storyteller and interviewer model is a fluid model, and both participants can take turns asking each other questions.
- Most of all, relax and have fun! Enjoy the opportunity to share the stories, experiences, and thoughts that can come with this experience.

# RESOURCES & TOOLS FOR ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING SUPPORT



# 6 BUILDING BLOCKS OF STORYTELLING TEMPLATE

Think about what story you would like to tell. What accomplishment would you like to share? Is there a lesson learned that would be beneficial for others to hear? This template can help to frame your story to ensure you deliver an impactful, clear and relatable message to your audience.

## **STEP 1: THE IMPACT**

*There should always be a desired impact of your stories. What measurable outcome would make your storytelling initiative successful? What end result is most important? What specific action do you want your audience to take?*

## **STEP 2: EFFECTIVE CHARACTER**

*Most stories contain a single, compelling character that is relatable to the audience and who is comfortable relaying specific details, memories and experiences. Who is going to be the focal character in your story?*

## **STEP 3: TRAJECTORY**

*Effective stories have a beginning, middle, and end. What do you want to highlight in your story? Make sure to present a clear, concise story about a single issue.*

#### **STEP 4: AUTHENTICITY**

*Stories should also show – rather than just tell – the audience about the character’s journey, using rich details and featuring the character’s own voice. What details are important to emphasize?*

#### **STEP 5: ACTION-ORIENTED EMOTIONS**

*Stories should convey emotions that move people to act. What pathways can you include to drive them to your desired actions?*

#### **STEP 6: A HOOK**

*Stories should capture the audience’s attention as quickly as possible. A hook provides a reason to care and answers the following questions immediately... Whose story is it? What’s happening? What’s at stake?*



# STORYTELLING EXAMPLE

MomsRising partnered with the National League of Cities and School Readiness Consulting on the Strong Start for Strong Cities initiative to support access to high-quality early learning opportunities in cities across the nation. As a key part of this work...

- A guide was developed that highlighted best practices and stories from families living in each of the 50 states across the country. Amplifying what mayors and leaders can do along with effectively portraying the need through the use of effective storytelling in their local communities.
- Press events took place to publicize the guide and push out the message of the importance of early childhood education.
- Additionally and to further move the strategic effort forward, families are being encouraged and supported with delivery of these books and to share their stories in person to drive home this message.



[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

## STORY EXCERPT FROM GUIDE:

### *Angelica, Tacoma, WA*

A few months ago, I was about to turn down my hard-won admission into law school because of the cost of my children's childcare. Without help, there was no way I could afford to take on the loans for my education and pay for childcare for my 3 young children. It was either law school or my kids. Luckily, just in time I found a way to help cover some of my childcare expenses, but it is not guaranteed nor a sure way for any student. Leaving me without childcare stability and the chance that I may have to leave law school anytime due to improper access to childcare.



Yet, far too often do student parents struggle to make ends meet between the cost of tuition and childcare for their young children. Luck shouldn't be a requirement for student parents to be able to go to school to pursue their dreams and create brighter futures for their families. Enough is enough. It's time for a change.

# PECHA KUCHA PLANNING TEMPLATE

	TOPIC	IMAGE	SCRIPT
MINI PECHAKUCHA	SLIDE 1		
	SLIDE 2		
	SLIDE 3		
	SLIDE 4		
	SLIDE 5		
	SLIDE 6		
	SLIDE 7		
	SLIDE 8		
	SLIDE 9		
	SLIDE 10		
	SLIDE 11		
	SLIDE 12		
	SLIDE 13		
	SLIDE 14		
	SLIDE 15		
	SLIDE 16		
	SLIDE 17		
	SLIDE 18		
	SLIDE 19		
	SLIDE 20		

Source: Created by M. Weaver-Hightower, Educational Foundations and Research, University of North Dakota

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