

## TIPS FOR PRESENTING THE FIRST 2000 DAYS

1. **Make the presentation your own.** Use your own words. Consider adding a short personal story that relates to the issue. Stories and examples are very concrete and people relate to them the best. It also is a good contrast to the data in the presentation.
2. **Don't worry about not being an expert.** Very few people who give this presentation are experts in the field of early childhood learning. You don't have to know everything! Audiences are very understanding.

Here are some tips for those of us that aren't early childhood learning experts:

- Review source material in the presentation guide.
  - Review the website [www.buildthefoundation.org/initiative/first-2000-days](http://www.buildthefoundation.org/initiative/first-2000-days) – refer your audience here for further information.
  - Decide ahead of time who you can refer people to if you don't have the answer to a specific question. Have that information handy.
  - Tell your audience up front that you are someone who has been learning about this issue and is concerned about our children's futures and believe that you can make a difference.
3. **Focus on the goal.** Our goal in these presentations is to provide information in a way that will inspire others to get involved and take action. The best presentations are those where the presenter is perceived as authentic and hopeful and where the material presented supports that hopefulness and does not overwhelm the audience. Tell your audience that this presentation is part of a statewide effort. Being a part of something larger is a good motivator.
  4. **Highlight key points/suggested emphasis.** There are a handful of key points we want to emphasize to our audiences including:
    - Our country's prosperity and security depend on our investment in early childhood education.
    - The earliest years of life have life-long consequences on learning, behavior and health.
    - There is ample evidence to support the benefit of these investments, including the financial return from these commitments.
    - What is lacking is a groundswell of public will to invest.
    - We need you to share the information and become an ambassador for young children.

5. **Address frequently asked questions/comments.** The most questions and comments come from the data about military readiness. People have a hard time believing or want to talk more about how it is possible that 71% of Americans age 17-24 cannot meet the military eligibility requirements. But when you break it down to the top reasons: lack of physical fitness, lack of a high school diploma and a criminal record, it becomes more clear that it is possible. We also talk about how the military is becoming increasingly high tech, requiring a skilled workforce.

The other popular question, sometimes articulated as a comment, is about the responsibility of parents.

**Question:** Why can't parents be responsible for their child's early learning?

**Answer:** Parents are children's first and most important teachers. Across our community and state, parents are engaged and dedicated to their children's early learning experiences. At the same time, many parents rely on childcare programs so that they are able to work and support their families and other services such as those to sustain good health.

6. **Ask the audience to get involved and complete the call to action card.** Decide ahead of time whose responsibility this will be—the presenter or another person, such as the host of the meeting. This is a critical part of the program as it determines the focus of the follow up work.

We want people to become involved in ways that use their knowledge, talent and relationships. Key to this is reviewing both sides of the Call to Action cards with your audience at the end of the presentation.

Be sure that someone has been assigned to collect the cards from the tables. Your team should review the cards to determine next steps with participants.