

Effective Presentations

Effective presentations have three basic parts and a well thought-out “point.” The “point” is the general idea that you want your audience to walk away with, and should generally support inclusion and family involvement in education.

Three Parts

Remember, you are doing more than simply sharing your story with a friend. You are giving a presentation, and all effective presentations and stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In general, the idea is to tell the audience what you are going to tell them, tell it to them, and then tell them what you told them.

1. Introduction
Engage your audience! Make them want to hear your story. Introduce yourself, your story, and your objectives, but make sure to connect it to your audience’s experience. What will they gain from listening to you?
2. Body
Share your story. Start at the beginning and end at the end (don’t go back and forth in time), and continue to engage your audience by *sharing* a personal story rather than *reporting* facts. Make sure you include important details and explain the effect of the experience on your family and your child’s education.
3. Conclusion
Bring it all home. In the conclusion, you answer the (hopefully hypothetical) question “So What?” What is your goal in sharing this story? What do you want your audience to know and understand after sharing with you? This is where you make your point and add impact to your story.

The Point

The “point” of your story is the kernel of knowledge or understanding that you want to communicate to your audience. Your story is important, but its meaning and your message are more important because they are more memorable.

State your message clearly at the beginning of your presentation, illustrate it with your story, and re-state it, now with new meaning, at the end of your presentation. A well-planned combination of both stating and illustrating your message is the best method.

Supporting Inclusion and Family Involvement

Sharing your story gives you the opportunity to promote inclusive education. Remember that you are sharing your story as an anecdote to illustrate one of several themes in inclusive education:

- the value of inclusion to students, families, and communities.
- the value of parent / professional collaboration.
- the need for systems change towards inclusion.
- the need for better teacher preparation programs, which include inclusive practices.
- support for inclusion in the law, the government, and numerous advocacy organizations.