

## Sharing your personal story with legislators

Your legislators may not know about PACER Center, special education, or disability-related issues depending on their background and what committees they serve on. Start with a brief introduction and choose one key issue or story to focus on. Review PACER Center's legislative priorities. Think about your experience and if you have a story that relates to any of the policy priorities. If so, that would be a great story to share. If your experiences do not relate to any of our current legislative priorities, there is still power in any story you share. Remember to prepare, organize, and keep it short and direct.

### How to Introduce yourself to your legislator:

#### Introduce yourself:

- **Tell them your name, where you live, and stress that you are their constituent.**

#### Share your story:

- **If you are a person with a disability**, you may want to share a little bit about what your disability is and the challenges you face.
- **If you are a parent of a student with a disability**, share a photo of your child or family, a little bit about what their disability is, and the challenges they face.
- **Tell a personal story** that highlights how legislation or the lack of legislation affects your family and child.
  - **Share the struggles** that barriers to access create and why this is a concern.
- **Ask them to support policy changes** that will improve the lives of families like yours.
  - This could be a general request to support an issue you care about, PACER Center's priorities, or a specific bill that has or will be introduced this session.
  - You may also be asking them to oppose certain legislation if you are concerned it will hurt families.
  - Share how these policy changes would affect your family.

#### Follow up and ask if they:

- Are familiar with the issue or concern you have shared
- Have any questions, or would like more information about the issues you have shared
- Will support legislation addressing your concern and PACER Center's legislative priorities

**Thank them for their time and consideration.**