**Sample Agenda**

While every meeting with a policymaker will be a little different, we offer a sample agenda to share how the conversation can incorporate different elements into a cohesive narrative for your policymakers.

**A | Introduce the *Think Babies* Campaign**

1. Your organization, the family, and policymaker/staff will introduce themselves and make small talk.
2. Your organization will introduce *Think Babies* and why you are here to meet with the policymaker/staff.

* *“We’re here today to make sure that you/your office will Think Babies That’s the name of the campaign, but it’s also our ask.”*
* *Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of babies and families.*
* *We are [INSERT BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION] and are here to make sure that when you’re thinking of the families you serve, you’re thinking of families like [PARTICIPANT’S] with little ones.”*
* *“Here’s why we have brought families to meet with legislators: Babies’ brains grow fastest between the ages of 0 to 3 than at ANY other point in our lives. Brain development during the first few months and years of life has an enormous impact on how a child learns and grows throughout their lifetime.”*
* *“Investing in babies’ brain development is one of the most important things we can do to raise healthy, well-rounded adults, and every dollar we invest in infant and early childhood programs will return great benefits for our children, our community, and our country.”*
* We know that the state where a baby is born makes a big difference in their chance for a strong start in life. Overall, [STATE] ranks in the (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th) tier looking at areas essential to give our babies the best beginning, but all states have room to grow. [FIND YOUR STATE RANKING [HERE](https://stateofbabies.org/states/)]
* *“We need to invest in the first three years of life to give all our babies the best chance to succeed in life. Our priorities are [INSERT PRIORITIES].”*

1. Your organization transitions to the participant’s story:

* *“I’m so glad [PARTICIPANT] could join us today. [PARTICIPANT], do you want to tell us about your family and why you think [POLICYMAKER] needs to Think BabiesTM?”*

**B | Storytelling**

1. Participants will share a bit of background about their family and why they are in the state capital or other event location.
2. Participants will point out how they are mindful of their child’s brain development and why that’s so important. A great way to showcase this is for the participant to describe anything she has noticed about her baby’s development recently; how they learned it, etc.
3. Participants will share challenges they’ve faced, or the benefits of supports they’ve received, identifying programs or interventions that match up with your organization’s policy priorities (such as paid leave, home visits, affordable child care that also offers small ratios, etc.).
4. Your organization will then tie the participant’s story back to the campaign and policy discussion.

**C | Educate and Ask**

1. Your organization will connect stories to the broader impact of investments.

* *“Here’s why this is so important. What happens in these early years has long-lasting effects. On the individual child, yes. But also on [OUR STATE/COMMUNITY].”*
* *“Children who are healthy—socially, emotionally, and physically—have a greater chance of becoming economically productive and engaged citizens.”*
* *“When we ignore the critical first few months and years of development, we pay for it in the long run. Negative early experiences can translate into lower academic achievement, higher disease rates, increased economic dependence, criminal activity and incarceration, and other challenges that cost all of us.”*
* *“Most of our investments in early childhood start too late, at ages 4 and older. By that time, the important years of early brain development have passed, along with the chance to influence how a child relates to/engages with others for the rest of their lives.”*

1. Your organization will close out the meeting with a final “ask.” Keep in mind that this must be non-lobbying, meaning that you can’t refer to specific legislation.

* *“[POLICYMAKER/STAFF], we’re asking you to Think Babies—think about [PARTICIPANT], her family and so many families like theirs—when you’re writing legislation or in committee hearings.”*
* *“Every dollar we invest in infant and early childhood programs will return great benefits for our children and our country. Raising socially and emotionally healthy children will promote school retention, improve the quality of the workforce, increase graduation rates, more employment, and healthier lives.”*

1. Your organization will offer yourself as a resource. If the family is comfortable with it, you can also offer to reconnect the policymaker with them as a follow up on specific issues.

* *“I hope that when you’re considering the effects of legislation on families, you’ll reach out to [ORGANIZATION]. We can be a resource, share materials, and provide data to help you make the case for investing in the first three years in our state.”*