

Creating an Elevator Speech

Using value-based language to advocate for library services to children & families



Successful elevator speeches use value-based language to allow you to advocate for the transformative services the library offers children and families every day. Start building your own strong elevator speech with this template, where you replace the bracketed sections with the specific patron group, program, and outcome you want to tout:

"I help [target audience*]
[verb phrase*] at the library so that
[proven/expected positive outcome for target audience*] ."

Use this template to answer the common question asked of library staff: "What do you do at the library?"

Instead of answering with a job responsibility (e.g., "I do storytime at the library.") you can instead reply in a manner that highlights the impact of what the library offers in your community:

"I help parents and caregivers promote kindergarten readiness at the library so that their young children can start school ready to learn."

This type of value-based elevator speech is much more powerful for advocating for the library.



Sample Scenarios for Elevator Speeches

Talking with a local community organization:



We help youth from low-income households to find, read, and learn from high-quality, interesting materials at the library over the summer so that they maintain their reading level and return to school ready to learn.

Talking with teachers & school administrators:



We help students access a range of print and digital resources related to school assignments so that they can achieve school success.

Talking with a manager or board member:



We provide opportunities for young children and their caregivers to talk, sing, read, write, and play together at the library so that caregivers understand their vital role in helping their children be prepared to start kindergarten.

ALSC

Association for Library Service to Children