MINDY BENNETT CONSULTING, LLC

INSPIRING LEADERS - TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS - DELIVERING RESULTS

How an Early Childhood Advocate Can Write an Op-Ed or Use Media

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Purpose & Session Overview

Write	• Write compelling op-eds that connect heart and data
Frame	• Frame timely messages for impact
Use	• Use media and social platforms to elevate advocacy

Why Write an Op-Ed

- Raise Awareness
- Influence Policy
- Humanize the Issue
- Shape Public Opinion
- Establish Your Voice
- Inspire Action

Bottom Line: *If we don't tell the story of early childhood, someone else will tell it for us.*

What Is an Op-Ed?

- 600–800 words, persuasive and solution-driven
- Focus on one clear idea
- Conversational, personal, authoritative tone

The Anatomy of an Op-Ed

Example Headline

“Indiana’s Workforce Crisis Starts with Child Care — Here’s How We Fix It.”

Writing Workshop – The Hook

Activity:

- Choose one child care issue.
- Write a 2–3 sentence opening using a fact, story, or question.
- Share your first sentence in chat.

Writing Workshop – Complete your Argument

Activity – finish these sentences

- “This matters because _____.”
- “We know this because _____.”
- “One practical step is _____.”

Take 90 seconds & then offer one response in chat

Writing Workshop – Offer a solution

Activity:

- Take 1 minute to think of a solution.

- Summarize your solution in the chat.

Writing Workshop – Call to Action

Activity:

- What do you want the reader to do next?

- Put one action in the chat.

Building Your Case: Heart & Evidence

1. Brainstorm:

Story	Evidence	Solutions

2. Write a short paragraph combining them.

Example Paragraph

“According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, child care breakdowns cost employers $23B each year. In our community, a small business lost two employees due to shortages. Employers can help by offering child care benefits.”

Get your message into the world: Ways to expand your message

- Submit locally
- Post excerpts online
- Join radio or podcast discussions
- Repurpose for blogs or newsletters

Pitching to Media

Tips:

- Reference a recent story
- Keep it local
- Include contact info and bio
- Be clear on your 'ask'

Indiana Media Contacts

Examples:

- WFYI (Dylan Peers McCoy)
- Chalkbeat Indiana (MJ Slaby, Aleksandra Appleton)
- Indy Star (Caroline Beck)
- WRTV (Kara Kenney)
- Indiana Capital Chronicle

Call to Action

Write one Media Action Step for the next 30 days:

Submit an op-ed

Pitch a local outlet

Share a story online

From public message to direct advocacy

A strong op-ed helps your community understand the issue.

A strong conversation helps an elected official understand the decision you want.

NEXT: Hear practical guidance on visiting elected officials and making your advocacy personal and effective.