

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Public Engagement with Science

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MOTHERS AS SCIENCE STORYTELLERS

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Mothers as Science Storytellers

Elements in Public Engagement with Science

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Abstract: This Element explores how scientific meaning and decision-making are filtered through the stories we tell about science and through our social, cultural, and personal identities. Focusing on mothers as a prominent and important identity in science communication, the Element explores both the obstacles and the opportunities for public engagement with scientific topics. After providing an overview of the nexus of science communication, stories, and identities, the author applies key insights from these topics to the case study of motherhood in the climate change and vaccination controversies. The author then offers science communication strategies based on these insights for science communicators, mothers, and other caregivers. This analysis is original research that demonstrates the value of understanding stories and identities in mobilizing mothers for both science skepticism and science advocacy.

Keywords: storytelling, climate change, vaccination, science communication, motherhood

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