



WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR --HELPFUL TIPS--

Ohio Chapter

Letters to the editor of your local newspaper(s) are an ideal way to communicate the importance of health and injury prevention issues for our children. You can use it to comment on a column, article or other news coverage that discusses key issues.

While newspapers cannot print every letter they receive from their readers, there are some general guidelines to follow when developing letters to the editor that may help ensure they are printed. These guidelines include:

- **Letters should be in your own words.**
 - ✓ You should pick one or two key points and write about how they directly affect you and your governing body, organization or business.
 - ✓ Be mindful of who you represent in the letter. You should represent yourself as a pediatrician or representative of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics.
 - ✓ DO NOT represent your hospital or practice.
- **Letters should describe your connection to the issue at hand.**
 - ✓ Describe how the issue will help your community and how you are connected to the issue.
 - ✓ Be sure to maintain your credibility by making realistic statements about the impact the issue you're discussing will have on your community and avoid exaggerations.
- **Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.**
 - ✓ 200 words is a good length and should allow you to make your point succinctly and clearly.
- **Letters should be timely.**
 - ✓ It is a good idea to reference the article you are responding to in your letter. If you are writing in response to a previous article written by the newspaper, you should make every effort to get your letter to the newspaper within one week of the original article's publication.
- **Sign your letters and include your city of residence and a daytime phone number.**
 - ✓ Most newspapers will call to confirm if they choose to run your letter and will not run a letter that does not include a signature and contact information.
 - ✓ Send the letter from your personal email account as to not appear to be representing your hospital.
- **Consider using technology.**
 - ✓ Many newspapers now accept letters to the editor via e-mail or through an online form. Letters sent electronically are easy for papers to publish because they do not have to be re-typed into the newspaper's computer system.