



HOW TO MAKE A PITCH CALL TO JOURNALISTS

Never call any journalist without proper preparation. Develop a concise talk – no more than one minute in length – that communicates all of the essential points. Repeat your pitch aloud several times until you are comfortable with it. Always do a role play with someone – a Regional Council member, your regional Council Director, the Kids Are Priority One Coalition’s Communications Coordinator, a spouse or a friend – before making the call.

Pitchers don't win the World Series without fine-tuning their skills. Musicians don't make it to Carnegie Hall without practice. Actors don't perform on Broadway without extensive rehearsing. If you want to be successful talking to journalists, you must practice your pitch.

Use this approach whenever you are calling a journalist, whether it's an editor, a radio show host or a reporter (these rules are doubly important if you're making a first "cold" call):

- Introduce yourself as a member of the Kids Are Priority One Coalition.
- Start by asking if he/she has a moment to talk. (If the journalist is busy or on a deadline, ask, "When is a good time to reach you?")
- Affirm his/her recent work—whether it's an article or an editorial or a radio segment. This will show that you're in touch with his/her work.
- Ask a question you think that he/she won't know the answer to. This piques the journalist's curiosity. For example: "Have you heard that Gaye Symington has begun to include child care as necessary for Vermont’s economic development?"
- Give a brief description of the issue and include any local angle you can think of, including local child care statistics, how the issue affects the community or local members of Congress that may be influential. Refer to the Coalition’s Child Care Subsidy Program fact sheet.
- If you are calling an editor or a reporter, ask for a meeting. There is no better way to develop an ongoing relationship than through a face-to-face meeting.
- Be prepared to go through all of these steps in less than two minutes, as the journalist may be busy.
- As you are talking, allow openings for the journalist to ask questions and engage in the conversation. Listen for cues that will let you know the degree of interest on the other end of the line.
- If the journalist is unavailable, leave a message and try calling back every day until you reach him/her. Leave messages periodically.