

## WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### When should I write a letter to the editor?

- To reinforce a positive story in the newspaper;
- To highlight new information and/or inform readers about the good work going on that benefits young children;
- To recognize individuals or organizations that are making a difference for young children in your community;
- If there is a need to respond to a negative story about early childhood; and,
- To encourage those in the community to support young children and their families.

### What are the rules for letters to the editor?

Guidelines vary for each publication. Most have rules available on their website. Check with your local newspaper to determine:

- How many words are allowed for a letter;
- Deadlines for submission to the newspaper; and,
- Other rules or restrictions, such as how often you are allowed to submit a letter.

### Tips for writing the letter

- Organize your thoughts.
  - Try to focus on 1-3 main points.
  - If responding to an article, re-read the article before starting your letter.
- Use short, concise sentences.
- Avoid clichés, catch phrases and wordy language.
- Be as positive as possible.
- Get to your points quickly.
- Just because you are allowed 200 words doesn't mean you have to use them all.
- Don't repeat negatives or misinformation.

### Final preparations for submitting a letter

- Read it at least three times before submitting.
- Organize your thoughts.
  - Did you get your facts right?
  - Did you make your points?
  - Check the spelling.
  - Correct grammatical errors.
- Have a friend or independent party read the letter and get their thoughts.
  - Did they understand the main points you were trying to make?

You can submit a letter by regular mail or e-mail. E-mail is the quickest way to submit a letter, and usually this is the preferred method. Remember: Newspapers receive many letters. Submitting one does not guarantee it will be published.