

Working with the Media

Getting Your Messages Out

The greatest message in the world is useless if no one sees or hears it.

Getting your messages out means:

- ♦ Identifying the most effective, appealing ways to reach your audience
- ♦ Identifying ways to reach your audience that fit within your budget
- ♦ Identifying ways to reach your audience that work best for your message
- ♦ Considering the potential unintended effects your message may have on others besides your audience – who will receive it
- ♦ Working with the news media effectively

Explore the Dissemination Tools at Your Disposal

This section addresses considerations for finding valuable, creative ways to get the word out and provides particular detail on working with the news media. Your goal should be maximum exposure for your message. To build awareness and motivate people to take action, you want your target audience to see, hear, or read your message repeatedly in a variety of different places over time. To decide what tools to use to get your messages out, you will apply what you learned in earlier research and consider several other factors. Ask yourself these questions.

What are the most effective, appealing vehicles that reach the audience?

Think about what you know about your audience members. Consider the places they frequent, their daily activities, and their media consumption. A list of potential outreach options should include a wide variety of communication vehicles. For example:

- ♦ Print materials (fact sheet, brochure, newsletter)

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- ♦ Information posted on the internet (a web site of your own, information on the city or town site)
- ♦ A slide presentation for use at group meetings
- ♦ A speech by a local leader
- ♦ Posters (placed in settings relevant to your audience such as parks, schools bus shelters, doctors' offices, factory lunchrooms, grocery stores, libraries, senior centers, gyms, etc.)
- ♦ An ad in a newspaper or magazine, or commercial on the radio or TV
- ♦ An article, column, or guest editorial in a newspaper or magazine
- ♦ Banners at shopping malls or sporting events
- ♦ Collateral materials such as t-shirts, baseball caps, water bottles, refrigerator magnets, buttons, post-its, or key chains
- ♦ A staffed table at a health fair, new hospital opening, or farmer's market

What can you afford?

Some communication vehicles, such as professionally produced television and radio advertising, can be expensive. Others, such as writing opinion pieces or making a slide show, require more work on your part than direct expense. The rule of thumb is to use a variety of means for reaching your audiences.

What communication vehicles work best for your message?

Not all message opportunities are created equal. Some simply work better for given audiences than others. For example, if your message to active adults is "a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity every day," you might focus on the local gym rather than senior centers. But, if your message is "invite a friend to walk to school on Walk to School Day and

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every Wednesday thereafter," perhaps the local senior center is just the place to recruit adult volunteers to accompany the children.

What unintended effects could your message have - particularly for non-target audience members?

Unintended effects can be positive, such as bringing people you never expected to your event, or negative such as offending or stigmatizing a group of non-audience members. The best defense against negative unintended effects is a careful research process that includes testing messages and materials with diverse individuals, and careful thought.

Common Ways to Disseminate Messages

The following table describes common message dissemination channels. It includes a variety of options and wide range of costs. Use these starting points for your own brainstorming about message dissemination strategies.

Common Ways to Disseminate Messages		
Type of Media	Pros	Cons
PAID MEDIA →		
<p>TELEVISION</p> <p>Usually 15-, 30-, or 60-seconds long. Most run 30 seconds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reaches a broad audience ◆ Audio and visual impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Expensive to produce ◆ Expensive to air ◆ Short amount of time in which to deliver message
<p>RADIO</p> <p>Usually 60 seconds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Expensive, but cheaper than television ◆ Narrower target ◆ Can be produced quickly ◆ Typically longer than television spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Audio impact only ◆ Narrow reach

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<p>PRINT Ads in newspapers, magazines and other publications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reach very specific audience, often including opinion leaders ◆ Short lead time, immediate impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Very short life span (for dailies) ◆ Often misses younger and lower socio-economic people
<p>OUTDOOR Includes billboards and other outdoor signage in places such as stores, busses, trains, or benches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can reinforce messages also placed elsewhere ◆ Can repeatedly expose commuters to message ◆ Transit space can be inexpensive compared to other forms of media ◆ Possibly high exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limited message space ◆ Weather/graffiti damage ◆ Very difficult to target narrowly
<p>PRESS RELEASES ◆</p>		
<p>Placing stories in print or broadcast media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Does not require out-of-pocket costs like buying print space or air time ◆ Can achieve good reach ◆ Credibility with readers/viewers ◆ Can be particularly helpful for reaching policy and decision makers, who are often attuned to news media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limits on the extent to which you can control the message, as you will not be writing the story ◆ Feature placement requires contacts and may take more time
<p>Obtaining free print space or air time for public service announcements (PSAs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Less expensive than buying ads or air time ◆ Can provide copy (instead of pre-made ads) for radio announcers to read – less expensive than producing spots ◆ Print PSAs can be inexpensive to produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ PSAs can be expensive to produce (especially television and radio) and distribute ◆ No control over if and when your message will air, and thus over how well it will reach your target audience
<p>POINTS OF INTERACTION ◆</p>		
<p>Placing a message near where people will be deciding whether to be active, vote for a policy change, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Exposes audiences when they are well positioned to act on your advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limited space for a message ◆ Sometimes difficult to gain access to the point of interaction

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<p>MOVIE TRAILERS / SLIDES ▶</p>		
<p>Movie Trailer / Slides – Video and/or still photos shown before movie begins</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Targets heavy movie goers (including hard-to-reach teens) ◆ Advertising trailers can have high impact (audio and visual on a large screen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Production and placement of trailers can be expensive ◆ Slides before movies may not reach large audience ◆ Somewhat inefficient: few theaters allow targeting to specific kinds of movies ◆ Some film distributors do not allow ad trailers
<p>PRINT MATERIALS ▶</p>		
<p>Informational brochures, posters, newsletters, paycheck stuffers, and flyers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can be inexpensive to produce ◆ Longer life ◆ Some types support detailed messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Not an “interruption” medium, so recipients must want to be reached ◆ Needs to be disseminated ◆ Duplicates may be provided to the same individuals
<p>ONLINE VEHICLES ▶</p>		
<p>WEB SITES Many programs build sites; some sites are aimed at specific audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can be relatively inexpensive ◆ Information always available to those who seek it ◆ Can be updated quickly ◆ Unlimited message area ◆ Can promote your issue/message through partners’ websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Must use promotional efforts to drive traffic to site ◆ Maintenance and monitoring required ◆ May limit audience or miss certain demographic or socioeconomic groups
<p>WEB BANNERS Click-through banners can link commercial and partner web sites to the program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Broadens exposure on new media ◆ Can range from inexpensive to expensive to produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Click-through” rates typically low ◆ Small message space ◆ May limit audience or miss certain demographic or socioeconomic groups

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SPONSORSHIPS		
<p>Payments to be promoted as a sponsor of a concert, sports contest, or other event. Goal is to win exposure while associating the campaign with something popular, credible, exciting, or in some other way viewed positively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Typically turn-key promotional opportunities (You can just pay money and the event staff will handle the rest) ◆ Associates program’s “brand” with well-liked celebrities, brands, or events ◆ Many want nonprofits to be associated with their event and may provide free benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can be expensive ◆ Association could be seen negatively by some audiences ◆ Limited reach versus mass media
COLLATERAL MATERIALS		
<p>Programs may create all sorts of other promotional materials, such as t-shirts, key chains, or refrigerator magnets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can provide continued – albeit limited – exposure to target audience ◆ Provides benefit for people involved in activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Need to distribute ◆ High cost for limited exposure

Table adapted from: Buckle Up America Online Strategy Booklet @ http://www.buckleupamerica.org/strategy/social_marketing/index and Making Health Communication Programs Work: A Planner’s Guide. Available online at <http://oc.ni.nih.gov/services/HCPW/HOME.HTM>

Earned Media - Television, Print, and Radio Stories

Many news stories are broadcast or written because someone close to the story alerts the media and persuades a producer or reporter that the information is valuable to his or her viewers, listeners, or readers. To be ready and able to enlist the media’s help, you must understand how the media works, and be prepared and willing to reach out to people who work in media.

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Understanding the Media and Being Prepared

The prospect of working with media can be daunting. Program planners are sometimes wary of working with the media because they worry that journalists can be antagonistic. Indeed, the journalist's role as devil's advocate is what we most often see on televised press conferences and news shows. However, journalists also have a keen sense of responsibility to their communities and the issues they cover. They are acutely aware of the reach of the media, and they take this seriously. There is nothing naive or unprofessional about asking for the help of a local reporter in letting the community know about opportunities to be more active and the good work that you and your program are doing.

In many cases, your media outreach will include these steps:

1. Prepare a media list
2. Identify a news hook that will appeal to reporters, such as a Walk to School Day
3. Send background information with your news, including your contact information (such as a media kit; see below for more information on kits). Be sure to include photographs, graphics, and relevant artwork that could supplement your story
4. Follow up with each reporter or producer by telephone. Be sure you know exactly what you want to say beforehand, keeping in mind that reporters are busy and very often on tight deadlines. Know what you are asking the reporter to do: cover an event, take a photo, interview spokespeople, focus on the political aspects of an issue, write about program needs (volunteers, donations)?
5. Focus on your key messages once you have a reporter's interest (e.g., encouraging families to participate in Walk to School Day, Colorado Walking Wednesdays, letting kids know just how much fun it can be to get active, or listing the physical, social, and psychological benefits of physical activity and the civic benefits of an active community)
6. Offering additional relevant information, such as public health statistics, facts about the decline of school-based physical education

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programs, or unique human-interest stories about families that now walk to school.

To get started, research some fundamental information before you try to enlist the media or place a story. At a minimum:

- ♦ Research the television, radio, and print outlets that reach your target audience. This may require some exploration with the outlets themselves to learn who their viewers, listeners, and readers are. You may have an instinctive sense of some of these facts (e.g., the local AM 24-hour news radio stations probably have good reach with commuters). There are other details you will likely need to learn depending upon your audience, e.g., what are the most popular radio stations and listening times for parents in your community
- ♦ Identify which reporters cover issues relevant to your story, i.e., sports, education, health, community events
- ♦ Maintain a list of current contacts and individuals in the media with whom you would like to work, including fax/phone/email addresses and notes about their main interests and preferred ways that you contact them. Find out their deadlines. Good relationships with those in the media will serve you well over time
- ♦ To begin to develop your media list, check your local library for copies of Bacon's Publicity Checker and the Editor and Publisher Yearbook, both of which list media outlets across the country. The following table has ideas on who your media contacts may be – and whom your media list should include.

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Ideas for Potential Media Contacts

Media Outlets	Who to Contact
PRINT MEDIA —————▶	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, college/university papers and any small community newspapers, such as shoppers; circulars, real estate ads, commuter papers, or papers targeted to specific audiences such as women, specific ethnic groups, or older people) ◆ City and regional magazines ◆ Local trade and business publications, including newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General editor, for smaller papers or weeklies ◆ Editors of regional community-oriented sections (usually larger newspapers) ◆ Assignment or lifestyle editors ◆ News and metro/community reporters who may cover education, environmental, or policy news ◆ Health and consumer reporters who may cover hard news (new statistics on health risks) as well as feature stories ◆ Newspaper and magazine calendar editors who list community-based events ◆ Columnists who cover local events or consumer and health-related issues
RADIO MEDIA —————▶	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Local radio stations (including news, talk shows, call-in and local community affairs/public affairs programs) ◆ University radio stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assignment editors or news directors ◆ Producers of education, health, community, and public affairs shows ◆ Note: Call the local radio and TV stations to find out which of their programs are best suited for your story.
TELEVISION MEDIA —————▶	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Local television stations (including news, talk shows, call-in, and local community affairs/public affairs programs) ◆ University television stations ◆ Local cable television stations ◆ Public broadcasting stations (which may have relevant education, health or policy programming) ◆ State or local bureaus of national television networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assignment editors ◆ Producers of education, health, community, and public affairs shows ◆ On-air talent with a particular interest in education, health, physical activity, or community events

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Understand the Media's Goals & Working Environment

The key to successful media relations over time is often based on establishing productive relationships with media professionals. Here are some hints for doing that.

- ♦ Be conscious of reporter's deadlines. Give reporters advance notice of events. Deliver any requested information quickly, and well before their deadlines. Place calls early in the day. By late afternoon, many writers and broadcasters are working against that day's looming deadlines and will not be as receptive to your call.
- ♦ When possible, meet reporters, editors, and producers face-to-face.
- ♦ Be prepared for meetings and conversations. Bring written materials that support your messages to leave as background information. Be clear in your own mind your program's main messages so that you can be clear in conversations.
- ♦ Select an appropriate media spokesperson (i.e., one who knows the topic well, displays genuine enthusiasm and commitment, speaks well, and is a quick thinker).
- ♦ Send a thank-you note to your media contacts after a meeting and after they cover any of your program's activities.
- ♦ Besides covering a story, consider having members of the media take part in your event. For example, TV or radio stations sometimes co-sponsor events, or, you could invite an on-air personality to participate.
- ♦ Make yourself available to the media as a contact for questions in the future about your area of expertise.

Make sure you have "News"

Before you contact any media, be careful to ensure that your story is, in fact, newsworthy. Creating and pitching one bland announcement after another to your local media can actually mean less coverage if your media contacts stop

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paying attention to your calls and materials. Work to consistently deliver newsworthy stories that meet criteria such as the following:

Criteria Media will use to Judge Your Stories

Will the story...	Ask yourself, "Is the story"...
Appeal to the media outlet's audience?	Moving, important, or surprising to the media outlet's key audience?
Address issues that directly affect or are relevant to the community?	Local? Is there a problem, solution, or activity happening at the local level? Can you tie your story to national data using local statistics?
Stimulate debate?	Controversial? This increases the chance that it will be covered Are members of the community asking for significant changes in the way something is done? Is there opposition?
Generate high ratings or increase media audience?	About a hot issue? Driven by a celebrity or other influential person?
Include fresh angles that will sustain public interest?	New? Is there a new event or activity happening? Tied to new data or a report being released on the national level?
Distinguish the media outlet from its competitors?	Exclusive? Can you interest a media outlet by offering them the first crack at your story?

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Prepare Written Materials – A Media Kit

Before reaching out to the media, prepare materials that describe your program so reporters have a sense of what your program does and what its goals are. Your media kit will likely contain some standard materials about your program as well as materials that you tailor because of the particular media outlet or news hook you are focusing on. All materials should be a brief and easy to understand (no jargon or acronyms) as possible. Provide citations for all statistics so that reporters have the necessary source if they want to use the statistics in a story.

A media kit need not be packaged in a fancy way. In fact, many reporters say they like short and concise. However, if it does not stand out from the other materials the reporter receives, it might not get read. Let your imagination, creativity, and good taste guide decisions about packaging and the “look” of your kit. Certainly, though, use your program letterhead and/or logo for all materials and make sure your contact information is on each piece of the kit as the various materials may get separated as they are passed around the newsroom.

Standard Media Materials

- ♦ **Fact sheets** – set the context for the issues you are dealing with and amplify them, especially in ways relevant to your community. For example, provide data on the positive impact that walking can have on children’s performance in school, or the potential benefits of a few key changes within the community to improve conditions for walking. Think of these as background information to help a reporter give depth and breadth to your story.
- ♦ **Bio sketches or organizational summaries** – describe key people involved with your program and/or organizations that are offering services, facilities, or funding.
- ♦ **Visuals** – add color, human interest, and depth to your information. These can be photos, graphs of statistics that describe the problem, a timeline showing your program’s successes, posters, maps, or other visual materials that represent your program. Printing them in a camera-ready

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format and having electronic versions available make it easier and more likely the media outlet will use them.

- ♦ **Public service announcements** – if you are asking media outlets to place them for you, or copies of paid ads and collateral materials.

Adaptable Media Materials

Pitch letter – mailed along with the kit, highlights why your issues are pertinent to the media outlet's audience. The letter should be only about one page long and should spark interest by:

- ♦ Showing the human side of an issue
- ♦ Outlining the benefits of your program to the reporter's audience
- ♦ Including facts and figures pertinent to your community
- ♦ Mentioning some key message points about your program
- ♦ Offering your spokesperson for interviews

News release – announces something newsworthy. It gives the reporter the reason to pay attention to your materials now. A good release addresses the five Ws of any news story: who, what, where, when, and why (or how) in the opening or lead paragraph, since many people will not read any further.

Media advisory – serves as a brief invitation to members of the media for an event. The media advisory provides only who, what, when, where, and why. Unlike a press release, it does not provide a lot of supporting or background information.

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Sample Press Release Format

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">ORGANIZATION LOGO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(use your organization's letterhead)</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONTACT: Name of Contact Title Organization Phone Number Email address</p> </div>
<p>ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINE (Centered, Bold & Capitalized)</p> <p>Subtitle To Further Expand On Headline (if needed)</p> <p>ANYTOWN, STATE (Month Day, Year) – The lead paragraph should begin with the place or location where the news is being released. Following the location and date, explain who, what where, when. Your opening paragraph should be compelling enough to make the reader want to continue. Use 1 to 1.5 inch margins and double or 1.5 line spacing for the entire release.</p> <p>Your second and third paragraphs should support information in your lead paragraph. Here use quotes from experts and/or program spokespersons directly related to the information you have already provided.</p> <p>The most important information should be at the top of your release and less important information further down. Remember that the more localized you can make your release, the greater chance it has of being used by newspapers.</p> <p>The last paragraph of your release should be a "boilerplate" that describes your program in general and any partners/sponsors.</p> <p>General rules to keep in mind: try to limit the length of your release to 2 to 2 ½ pages at most. One page is even better. Use short sentences and paragraphs. If your release is longer than one page, place the word "-more-" centered at the bottom of the first page. Always add three number signs "###" to signal the end of your release. As with all media materials, print your press release on your organization's letterhead. Always proofread your release carefully.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">###</p>	

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Media Advisory

Rules of Thumb

- ♦ The purpose of a media advisory is to convince members of the media to attend your event. Make sure the event title and description is compelling and newsworthy.
- ♦ Send your media advisory to your contacts a few days before the event (3-4 days prior works best – if your event is on a Monday or Tuesday, send out the advisory the previous Wednesday or Thursday).
- ♦ Never exceed one page – keep descriptions to a few short, important sentences.
- ♦ Make calls to your media contacts the day before your event to make sure they received the advisory. Ask if they plan to attend and offer more information as appropriate.

Sample Media Advisory – on your organization's letterhead

<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 5px;"> <p>ORGANIZATION LOGO</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Date CONTACT: Name of Contact Title Organization Phone Number Email address</p> </div>
<p>HEADLINE THAT ANNOUNCES EVENT (Centered, Bold & Capitalized)</p> <p><i>Short Sentence or Reason for Event</i> (Directly under headline, centered, in italics)</p> <p>WHAT: Describe your event/program and sponsoring organization</p> <p>WHERE: Provide event location, including address, city, and state.</p> <p>WHEN: Date and time of event (e.g., Wednesday, October 8, 2003 8:00 AM MST)</p> <p>WHO: Include names, titles, and organizational affiliation of speakers and key individuals attending the event.</p> <p>WHY: Explain why the event is happening and why it's important to members of the community; why should the media attend – why is it news?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">###</p>	

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Track Your Progress and Interactions with the Media

Keeping track of your results means that you can track what you have achieved and which reporters are particularly open to your message. It also allows you – to some extent – to measure the reach of your messages by calculating the reader/listener/viewership for the stories about your program. You can use such compilations as one tool among many to demonstrate the effectiveness of your program’s outreach to those who ask. Tracking media interactions (past and ongoing) is important in another way. Doing so enables you to be highly organized in thanking reporters for covering past stories, noting specific reporters’ interests, and following up effectively.

Two methods of tracking results include:

- 1) Tracking the media "hits" your program achieved, and
- 2) Establishing a system for keeping up with media outlets that have interacted with your program in any way.

In your compilation of "hits," include copies of print stories, and tapes or scripts/summaries of broadcast stories. You should also include copies of the press materials and pitch letters that generated the interest, to use as models for future activities. Track interactions by using tracking or call sheets such as the example shown below.

Sample Media Tracking Form

Date	Contact Name & Title	Name of Organization & Program	Topic Interested in Covering	Result	Next Steps
4/05 Called 10 AM	Janet Willis Producer	WTSD TV “Community Talks”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children Walking to School ◆ Walk to School Day ◆ Walking Wednesdays 	Interview set for 5/05 6 AM Live broadcast	Send Background materials Follow up call 4/20/05

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Opinion Pieces and PSAs

In addition to striving to earn coverage via stories in the press, you may be able to get placement for a letter to the editor, a guest editorial, or a public service announcement.

Opinion Pieces - Letters to the Editor & Op-Ed Pieces

A letter to the editor should be in response to something else that appeared in the newspaper such as an article or editorial or even another letter. This means reading your local print media and looking for opportunities such as:

- ◆ Stories about school transportation/bussing issues
- ◆ Health stories about obesity, osteoporosis, increases in diabetes, or other issues that are a good fit with the arguments for increased physical activity and active living
- ◆ Budget or planning meetings where physical activity facilities might be a topic
- ◆ Stories covering youth and what the community can do to reduce crime, substance abuse, reckless driving, gangs, etc.
- ◆ Stories covering family life and offering suggestions for how parents can stay in touch with their kids
- ◆ Studies about the impact of increasing traffic congestion, accidents near schools, and/or pollution
- ◆ Timely issues such as holiday shopping or graduation gifts where you can put in a plug for gifts that encourage activity instead of sedentary behavior.

Sometimes you can create opportunities by tying in to other events. For example, the Colorado State Legislature has proclaimed October as Colorado Pedestrian Month and every Wednesday as Walking Wednesday. Schools throughout Colorado also participate in International Walk to School Day each October. In addition, the National Health Observances Calendar, available at

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www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp, lists a wide range of health-related observances, such as National Osteoporosis Prevention Month. You might be able to tie a letter to one or several of these commemorative weeks, depending upon the details of your campaign.

Keep it short and simple, and be sure to follow the paper's guidelines for submitting a letter to the editor. Make sure you mention your organization in the body of the text, where it is less likely to be edited out.

Op-eds (guest editorials) typically appear opposite the editorial page in the newspaper; some papers set aside days of the week or particular pages for materials written by readers ("My Turn" spaces, for example). An op-ed should relate to an issue of interest to the community, opening with a general statement and moving to more specifics. It should include a call to action or other definitive point of view – that's why they are called opinion pieces. The length should be about 500-600 words. It should be signed, and a brief bio of the author should be included. The cover letter should provide your contact information and let the editor know you are available to provide more information.

Try your hand at writing a guest editorial that encourages those in your community to do their part to make it an activity-friendly one, i.e., creating a community where residents are comfortable walking and bicycling.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are unpaid advertisements that promote the programs of government or nonprofit organizations serving the public interest. PSAs can be a powerful and economical way to reach audiences. For a message to qualify as a PSA, it must be:

- ♦ Noncommercial in nature
- ♦ Brief (generally 15, 30, or 60 seconds)
- ♦ On behalf of a nonprofit organization, charity, or other community group.

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We term PSAs "economical" because the airtime or print space they occupy is given gratis by a media outlet. However, developing PSAs can be expensive.

PSAs are more successfully placed when they:

- ♦ Have a strong public service appeal that will benefit most of the station's or newspaper's audience
- ♦ Are locally relevant to the station's viewing area or paper's circulation range. This can be achieved by tagging the ad with a local organization name, and/or phone number and web site.

To place your PSA, work directly with the public affairs directors at TV and radio stations. A sample letter to a public affairs director is included at the end of this section.

Radio

Because radio stations are no longer required to use PSAs, competition is intense for the time they choose to donate. However, most media managers want to respond to their community's concerns and are especially interested in communicating timely and relevant information on public health and the well-being of children. This is where you can play a critical role by meeting or talking to your local station managers to explain an upcoming event or, more generally, the impact of physical inactivity and the importance of disseminating information on active living.

In some cases, you may provide a pre-recorded ad. In many cases, radio stations are willing to do a less expensive "live read," meaning you provide the text, and an on-air personality reads it. In fact, some radio stations may prefer to use live-read announcer scripts for brand identity purposes. In addition, when announcers and disc jockeys read the PSA, the audience identifies the familiar voice and recognizes that the information is a public service message meant to benefit their community and listeners.

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Tip: *If your PSA is related to an event, make sure you reach out to the public affairs directors early. Plan ahead because media managers usually need 2-4 weeks to place a radio PSA into a broadcast rotation cycle. Encourage stations to air the PSAs at times when the highest numbers of people are likely to be tuning in: for radio, the morning or evening "drive time" (5:00 – 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.)*

Print

Newspapers and magazines have a limited number of pages and publish on a certain schedule and frequency, so placing print PSAs can be challenging. As with radio, successful print placement depends on how well you market or pitch your issue locally. One way to do this is by using statistics or facts on physical activity in your community. For example, how many people in your community are affected by inactivity? How many face environmental barriers to active living?

If you hope to take advantage of such free advertising, it always helps to have your announcement ready for print, or “camera-ready.” That means that the paper or magazine can simply drop it into the layout without having to do additional work of typesetting or laying out the ad. Many organizations provide media with ads in different sizes, for example in one or two column-widths, so that the paper or magazine can use a size that best fits their available space. It’s always wise to check with the publication and produce your ad in their desired format.

Tip: *You may want to start making calls to newspapers as early as 2 months in advance to pitch a print PSA. In general, call newspaper contacts 2-3 weeks before the date you would like to see the PSA published. Again, make your calls a few weeks in advance of any event to encourage print placements to appear in the days leading up to the event.*

Working with the Media

Television

As with print and radio PSAs, you should work with the public service director to place public service announcements on local television stations. Local relevance and potential benefit to the stations' audiences is key to appealing to these gatekeepers and getting placement for your PSAs.

A little-known option for getting broadcast PSAs placed is to work through the state broadcaster association. These organizations offer Noncommercial Sustaining Announcement Programs (NCSA), in which you pay the broadcaster association a fee to guarantee that your PSA will run. In a large state, for about \$30,000 for a one-month program, the state's broadcaster association will guarantee that 70% of its member television and radio stations will each air the spot 15 times, with an equal split among prime time, daytime, and other time slots. This program is available only to government agencies or nonprofit groups. At the end of each month, the broadcaster association sends a performance report outlining when and where the ads ran. This is often an option when there is not enough funding to run a paid campaign.

Letter to a Public Service Director

The following sample media pitch letter can be tailored to sell your community as a place where physical activity and an active lifestyle are fully supported. Every community is unique, so use the sample below as a guide – promote your own community by describing new programs or infrastructure that promote physical activity and encourage active living. (Be sure to personalize the letter and use your organization's letterhead.)

Rules of Thumb

- ♦ A pitch letter to media is essentially a sales letter – its purpose is to interest a reporter or editor to cover an event or issue, conduct an interview, and write or produce a story.
- ♦ Identify the appropriate media contact (in this case, probably a lifestyle, health, education, or city/community reporter). For local or community newspapers, one reporter or editor may cover multiple beats – if you are not sure who the appropriate contact

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is, place a call to the media outlet's main number or assignment desk to find out.

- ♦ Begin your pitch letter with a strong opening paragraph to grab the reporter's interest – use statistics or compelling facts and be sure to include the who, what, where, when, and why in the first few paragraphs.
- ♦ Write in a manner that is direct and to the point while still friendly and creative. Keep the reporter and his/her audience in mind – why should he or she be interested?
- ♦ A pitch letter should be one page or shorter in length. Try to limit your letter to 400 words or less. End the letter by telling your contact you will follow up with a phone call in the next few days. Provide your phone number and email address.
- ♦ As you state in your letter, call your contact to follow up and determine interest. Be prepared to answer questions about your topic, and do not forget to offer additional information and materials (photos, fact sheets, etc.).

Bottom Line

You know your audiences, what you want them to do, and what you need to say. Different media carry your messages to different audiences. Variety is important, as is repetition, so try to deliver your message frequently and through a number of different media and community channels.

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Sample Letter to PSA Director

On Your Organization's Letterhead

Date

Media Contact's Name
Organization
Address

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

In the first paragraph, grab the reader's attention by using an interesting fact or statistic about walking, physical activity, or active living, and tie it to local issues. For example, "Despite the clear health benefits of physical activity, two-thirds of American adults do not meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation that adults engage in physical activity at least five days a week for 30 minutes or more. However, new science shows that accumulating 30 minutes of moderate activity per day – by engaging in everyday activities like walking, bicycling, gardening, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator – can yield dramatic health benefits throughout the lifespan. Yet there are obstacles to walking in our community."

Second and third paragraphs provide program event information. Always remember to include who, what, why, where, and when. For example, "Through a new Walk to School campaign, [Name of your organization] and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation want to encourage families to engage in physical activity not just as a leisure-time endeavor, but as a routine, convenient part of everyday life."

Describe your community's program and benefits it offers; provide unique points and necessary details. If possible, describe a personal story or real life example of how the health of a family improved through walking their children to school.

Last paragraph describes the relevance to the media audience. [Name of program], your [readers, viewers, listeners] will be inspired to become more regularly active in their daily lives, therefore improving their overall health and quality of life. With your help, we can get the word out! I will follow this letter with a phone call in the next few days to discuss your interest and provide you with any further information or materials you may need.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title]
Enclosures

*"Get Your Messages Out" adapted from Promoting Active Living Communities
by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

Working with the Media

Sample School WTSD Press Release

On Your Organization's Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

CONTACT: Name of Contact

Title

Organization

Phone Number

Email address

LOCAL SCHOOL CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO PARTICIPATE IN WALK TO SCHOOL DAY ON OCTOBER (fill in date)

(Name of school planning event or number of schools in your area who are planning events) in (City where the school is located) will be joining schools from around the world to celebrate International Walk to School Day on October (fill in date).

The Partnership for a Walkable America established Walk to School Day in 1997. Last year over 4 million students, parents, and community leaders from over 40 countries and all 50 States walked to school together to celebrate Walk to School Day. The idea is to walk to school together with a purpose — to promote health, safety, physical activity, and concern for the environment.

Approximately (number of students who will be walking in event) students from (name of school(s) planning an event(s)) will be walking to school that day along with parents, teachers, and community leaders such as (names and titles of community leaders who will be participating in your walk).

The event will begin at (the time that your event will begin) with kids, parents, and community leaders walking from (location where walkers meet). Other special activities associated with the walk include: (list special activities associated with your walk such as a school assembly following the walk, having the children photograph the walking conditions of their neighborhood with disposable cameras, having the kids carry homemade signs, etc.)

Community sponsors who donated items to enhance our event include: (name of community sponsor) who donated (item donated by community sponsor), and (name of community sponsor) who donated (item donated by community sponsor).

For additional information, please contact (NAME/PHONE/EMAIL) or visit these Web sites:

International Walk to School in the USA
National Center for Safe Routes to School
International Walk to School
Colorado Walks

www.walktoschool.org
www.saferoutesinfo.org
www.iwalktoschool.org
www.coloradowalks.org

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Working with the Media

Sample *Community WTSD* Press Release

On Your Organization's Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

CONTACT: Name of Contact

Title

Organization

Phone Number

Email address

**COMMUNITY TO SPONSOR
WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY
OCTOBER (fill in date)**

On Wednesday, October (fill in date), (name of school) will be hosting Walk and Bike to School Day. (Name of school) has been participating in International Walk to School Day since (year).

Parents, children, community leaders (add names) are invited to walk and bike to school with their children on October 8. Neighbors and community members are invited to walk and bike as well. (If you are hosting staging areas, walking school buses, or bike trains, publicize and explain them here).

Walk and Bike to School Day is being sponsored by (name of School and sponsors). The event is a popular program that is getting more children to walk and bike to school. It is an international movement that aims to make everyday walk and bike to school days. More children walking and bicycling means better health benefits for them and the environment, and reduced traffic congestion and pollution for everyone.

The programs work by getting teams at schools to organize walking school buses and bike trains that promote and facilitate walking and bicycling to school. The teams work together with local officials, parents, and school children to map routes to schools and make the routes safer through physical improvements such as painting crosswalks, removing debris from sidewalks, and having adults accompany groups of children on their journey to and from school. The program also includes bicycle and pedestrian safety education to teach children the skills they need to be safe in traffic.

For additional information, please contact (NAME/PHONE/EMAIL) or visit these Web sites:

International Walk to School in the USA
National Center for Safe Routes to School
International Walk to School
Colorado Walks

www.walktoschool.org
www.saferoutesinfo.org
www.iwalktoschool.org
www.coloradowalks.org

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Working with the Media

Sample *Statewide* WTSD Press Release

On Your Organization's Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

CONTACT: Name of Contact

Title

Organization

Phone Number

Email address

**COLORADO PEDESTRIAN MONTH
OCTOBER 1-31, (fill in year)**

**WALK TO SCHOOL DAY
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER (fill in date)**

Walking is fun and important to children's lives – and millions of people across the world plan to send that message to their communities and beyond when they participate in Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October, (fill in date).

Colorado's goal is to engage children and adults in activity and in the process highlight the need for communities to make their streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. "Another purpose of the walk is to help reconnect children and adults with the simple joy of taking a walk together, a practice that can produce many valuable benefits," said Taralyn Jensen, CEO of TJ Life Fitness.

This year, over 4 million participants representing more than 40 countries and all 50 States will walk to school on October (fill in date). "Walk to School Day is the perfect way to begin October, which is Colorado Pedestrian Month, said Gay Page, President of Colorado Walks, because it brings students, parents, schools, community members, and elected officials together to make sure every child has a safe route to school and the opportunity to begin their day with a refreshing walk."

"Most parents think the safest way to get their children to school is to drive them up to the school door," Page said. "Unfortunately, the 'drive everywhere' mentality has created more and more congestion at schools and is contributing to the sedentary lifestyles that are starting to have major health consequences for even our youngest children."

"October is Child Health Month and walking your child to school is a terrific way to obtain physical activity and discuss safety in your own neighborhood," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the CDC. National statistics indicate that the percentage of overweight U.S. children and adults has more than doubled in the last 20 years, putting more Americans at risk for heart disease, diabetes and other serious health problems associated with obesity.

Working with the Media

International Walk to School in the USA
National Center for Safe Routes to School
International Walk to School
Colorado Walks

www.walktoschool.org
www.saferoutesinfo.org
www.iwalktoschool.org
www.coloradowalks.org

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The materials on the following pages can be used to supplement your press releases. It is always advisable to give the press background information and ideas for sidebar articles, feature stories, graphics, photos, etc.

Quick Facts – Supplemental Materials

About International Walk to School Day

- ♦ Walk to School Day was established in the United States in 1997 by the *Partnership for a Walkable America*. Canada and Great Britain already had walk to school programs in place. In 2000, these three countries joined together to create International Walk to School Day.
- ♦ In May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school.
- ♦ The National Center for Safe Routes to School serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the USA.
- ♦ Today, more than 5,000 schools in the USA participate in International Walk to School Day. Nearly 4 million people participate in approximately 40 countries as part of International Walk to School.
- ♦ Walk to School Day began as a simple idea – children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. It is an energizing event, reminding everyone of the simple joy of walking to school, the health benefits of regular daily activity, and the need for safe places to walk and bike. Schools focus on health, safety, physical activity and concern for the environment.
- ♦ Organizations supporting International Walk to School Day in the U.S. include America Walks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids Worldwide, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

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Kids Need to Move

Obesity rates among children have more than doubled in the past 20 years, according to the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. Even worse, rates of obesity are much higher among minority children than among white youth, suggesting a grave social inequity in the availability of safe, healthy recreational opportunities.

Add walking to the mix. Physical activity recommendations for children suggest that they need a variety of activities each day - some intense, some less so, some informal, some structured. Walking or cycling to and from school is an ideal way to get some of that activity at no extra cost to the child or family.

Walking to school is a missed opportunity. Roughly, 10 percent of children nationwide walk to school regularly. Even among those kids living within a mile of their school, only 25 percent are regular walkers.

Health and Well Being for the Whole Family

The Surgeon General of the United States recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week for all Americans to help them live longer, healthier lives. One of the easiest ways to get that is a brisk one and a half to two-mile walk.

Just 30 minutes of physical activity a day is enough to reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease (the number one killer of both men and women in America), diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, clinical depression, and some forms of cancer. To put it simply, with a daily two-mile walk you'll feel better, look better, and be better!

Break it up!

Your 30 minutes of activity can be accumulated with a 15-minute walk to school in the morning and a 15-minute walk home in the afternoon-and still provide the same health benefits, according to the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health.

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Walking works

Walking just one mile in 20 minutes will burn roughly the same number of calories as:

- ♦ Swimming the breaststroke for 9 minutes
- ♦ Running a mile in 10 minutes
- ♦ Bicycling for 16 minutes
- ♦ Playing baseball for 25 minutes

Be sociable

Nearly nine out ten parents who walk their children to school see it as an ideal way to meet new people, according to a survey in the United Kingdom. Many said that the school gate was a better place to meet new people than pubs, clubs, evening classes, or the supermarket.

Safety by the Numbers

Approximately 25,000 children are injured as pedestrians by motor vehicles each year. Therefore, some of the best ways to increase the safety of a child's walk to school are to:

- ♦ Provide safe, well-maintained walkways separate from vehicles;
- ♦ Teach children to cross streets at marked crossings, and provide ample, well designed, accessible, and, when necessary, monitored crosswalks;
- ♦ Slow traffic in neighborhoods and near schools.

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Working with the Media

Overweight in Children and Adolescents

The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent & Decrease Overweight & Obesity

The Problem of Overweight in Children and Adolescents

In 1999, 13 percent of children ages 6 to 11 years and 14 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight. This prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past two decades.

Risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, occur with increased frequency in overweight children and adolescents compared to children with a healthy weight.

Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents. Overweight and obesity are closely linked to type two diabetes.

Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80 percent if one or more parent is overweight or obese. Overweight or obese adults are at risk for a number of health problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some forms of cancer.

The most immediate consequence of overweight as perceived by the children themselves is social discrimination. This is associated with poor self-esteem and depression.

The Causes of Overweight

Overweight in children and adolescents is generally caused by lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of the two, with genetics and lifestyle both playing important roles in determining a child's weight.

Our society has become very sedentary. Television, computer, and video games contribute to children's inactive lifestyles.

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Forty-three percent of adolescents watch more than two hours of television each day.

Children, especially girls, become less active as they move through adolescence.

Determination of Overweight in Children and Adolescents

Doctors and other health care professionals are the best people to determine whether your child or adolescent's weight is healthy, and they can help rule out rare medical problems as the cause of unhealthy weight.

A Body Mass Index (BMI) can be calculated from measurements of height and weight. Health professionals often use a BMI "growth chart" to help them assess whether a child or adolescent is overweight.

A physician will also consider your child or adolescent's age and growth patterns to determine whether his or her weight is healthy.

General Suggestions

Let your child know he or she is loved and appreciated whatever his or her weight. An overweight child probably knows better than anyone else does that he or she has a weight problem. Overweight children need support, acceptance, and encouragement from their parents.

Focus on your child's health and positive qualities, not on your child's weight. Try not to make your child feel different if he or she is overweight, but focus on gradually changing your family's physical activity and eating habits.

Be a good role model for your child. If your child sees you enjoying healthy foods and physical activity, he or she is more likely to do the same now and for the rest of his or her life.

Realize that an appropriate goal for many overweight children is to maintain their current weight while growing normally in height.

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Physical Activity Suggestions

Be physically active. It is recommended that Americans accumulate at least 30 minutes (adults) or 60 minutes (children) of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Even greater amounts of physical activity may be necessary for the prevention of weight gain, for weight loss, or for sustaining weight loss.

Plan family activities that provide everyone with exercise and enjoyment. Provide a safe environment for your children and their friends to play actively; encourage swimming, biking, skating, ball sports, and other fun activities.

Reduce the amount of time you and your family spend in sedentary activities, such as watching TV or playing video games. Limit TV time to less than two hours a day.

Healthy Eating Suggestions

Follow the USDA Dietary Guidelines for healthy eating (www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines).

Guide your family's choices rather than dictate foods to eat.

Encourage your child to eat when hungry and to eat slowly.

Eat meals together as a family as often as possible.

Carefully cut down on the amount of fat and calories in your family's diet.

Don't place your child on a restrictive diet.

Avoid the use of food as a reward.

Avoid withholding food as punishment.

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Children should be encouraged to drink water and to limit intake of beverages with added sugars, such as soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, and sports drinks.

Plan for healthy snacks.

Stock the refrigerator with fat-free or low-fat milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables instead of soft drinks or snacks that are high in fat, calories, or added sugars and low in essential nutrients.

Aim to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Discourage eating meals or snacks while watching TV.

Eating a healthy breakfast is a good way to start the day and may be important in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

If Your Child is Overweight

Many overweight children who are still growing will not need to lose weight, but can reduce their rate of weight gain so that they can "grow into" their weight.

Your child's diet should be safe and nutritious. It should include all of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for vitamins, minerals, and protein and contain the foods from the major Food Guide Pyramid groups. Any weight-loss diet should be low in calories (energy) only, not in essential nutrients.

Even with extremely overweight children, weight loss should be gradual.

Crash diets and diet pills can compromise growth and are not recommended by health care professionals.

Weight lost during a diet is frequently regained unless children are motivated to change their eating habits and activity levels for a lifetime.

Weight control must be considered a lifelong effort.

A physician should supervise any weight management program for children.

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Working with the Media

October is Colorado Pedestrian Month

31 Safety Tips – One for each day of October

The following safety tips are from the Colorado Bicycle Manual, published by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program at the Colorado Department of Transportation. For complete information about pedestrian and bicycle rules of the road and trails in Colorado, request the Colorado Bicycle Manual from bicycleinfo@dot.state.co.us or 303-757-9982.

1. Motor vehicle drivers have a responsibility to act in ways to make the roads safe for all users including pedestrians and bicyclists. Motorists should make scanning for pedestrians and bicyclists a priority, as is scanning for other cars and trucks.
2. Colorado law requires that motorists and bicyclists yield to pedestrians – even if the motorists and bicyclists have a green light. It is your responsibility to know and obey all traffic laws.
3. Motorists should always drive slowly in school zones or when children are playing near a roadway. Young children do not have well-developed peripheral vision, often have trouble determining the source of a sound, and can't judge the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles. They may hear a car coming, but look the wrong way. They typically lack a sense of danger and are easily influenced by peers. Many crashes happen when one child takes a risk and a second child follows and is hit by a vehicle.
4. Parents – Group children along school routes for better visibility and driver awareness. When larger numbers cross together, it makes motorists more aware of kids crossing, increases driver compliance with stopping for crosswalks, and helps justify the installation of more extensive crossing protection devices. Look for adequate shoulder or sidewalk areas to provide refuge.
5. Parents – Children are not small adults. They often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect. They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. They are shorter than adults are and cannot see over cars, bushes, and other objects.
6. Before crossing a street, pedestrians should always:
 - ♦ Stop at the curb, edge of the road, or corner before proceeding;
 - ♦ Look left-right-left, and over their shoulders for turning vehicles; and
 - ♦ Continue to check for traffic while crossing the street.

Working with the Media

7. Make eye contact with drivers. Until you are sure, assume motorists do not see you. Expect the unexpected and watch for cars pulling out from driveways and at intersections. Don't take a walk signal, a green traffic light, or a driver for granted. Crossing safely is your responsibility.
8. Walk on the sidewalk or trail, not in the street. In areas where no sidewalk exists, walk facing traffic so that you can see cars coming. Keep as far away from traffic as possible. (**Note:** Bicycles are vehicles and by law, must always ride with the flow of traffic).
9. Wear bright-colored clothing, especially near dawn or dusk. If you are walking at night, you should wear reflective clothing and carry a flashlight. Reflective arm and leg bands and flashing LED lights attached to your clothing will help make you more visible to motorists. You need to be seen to be safe.
10. Always carry identification, medical information, and money for a phone call. Think ahead and be prepared. Having a windbreaker in your pack is a good idea because of Colorado's unpredictable weather – sunny in the morning and thunderstorms in the afternoon.
11. Crosswalks – Although crosswalks won't protect pedestrians from oncoming traffic, they do serve to guide pedestrians across the street. Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks. If there is a crosswalk button, press the button and wait for the walk sign to indicate that it is your turn to cross the street. Motorists are reminded to look out for and yield to pedestrians in the road when they see the bright, white lines of a crosswalk.
12. Right Turn On Red – At intersections where Right Turn On Red is permitted, motorists should always check for, and yield to pedestrians before turning.

Pedestrians should use extra caution and always look for turning vehicles before stepping off the curb. Pedestrians should not take "NO RIGHT TURN ON RED" signs for granted – they should always check for vehicles before stepping off the curb.

13. A pedestrian is any person on foot or any person using a wheelchair.
 - ♦ A pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 40 mph has a 15 percent chance of survival
 - ♦ At 30 mph, there is a 55 percent chance of survival
 - ♦ At 20 mph, there is an 85 percent chance of survival
(Source: US Department of Transportation)

Working with the Media

14. Pedestrians and bicyclists should always make eye contact with drivers. Until you are sure, assume motorists do not see you. Expect the unexpected and watch for cars pulling out from driveways and at intersections.
15. Walk – don't run, across the street. This gives drivers time to see you as you enter the roadway.
16. Choose the route with the fewest streets to cross.
17. Obey all traffic signs and signals.
18. Don't walk between parked cars to cross a street. Motorists can't see you because the cars block their view. You have to be seen to be safe.
19. Refuse to ride with strangers and never go for a walk with a stranger. Only walk with someone who your parents say is okay.
20. Be aware that cars may not stop even if the pedestrian has the right-of-way.
21. Step into the street only if you do not see cars moving toward you.
22. Listen for the sound of car motors, car doors, sirens, and horns before you step into the street.
23. Never run into the street to catch a ball or chase a toy, a friend, or a pet.
24. Don't cross in the middle of the street unless there is a crosswalk and signal or a crossing guard.
25. Use intersections with signals and pedestrian buttons whenever possible.
26. Use caution when walking near large vehicles by keeping in mind the fact that the driver has "blind spots" that make it impossible to see pedestrians.
27. Wait until the bus leaves the bus stop before trying to cross the street. Don't cross in front of, or behind a bus standing at a bus stop. As the bus moves away from the curb, the driver's attention will be directed at vehicle traffic, looking for a gap in traffic big enough for the bus. Stay on the sidewalk until the bus leaves the stop.
28. Back away from the edge of the street corner when a large vehicle approaches for a turn. The long distance between the front and rear wheels of the truck mean that the rear wheels may "off-track" and run across the pedestrian area at the curb. A

Working with the Media

- skilled driver knows just how the wheels must track in order to make a safe turn, but pedestrians must still be alert and move away from the curb.
29. On shared-use paths – Ride, skate, or walk with the flow of traffic as far to the right side of the trail as practical.
 30. On shared-use paths – Don't block the trail. Groups should be in single file when other trail users are present and should never use more than one-half of the trails to allow for the flow of traffic.
 31. On shared-use paths – You need to know who yields to whom.
 - ♦ Bicyclists, skaters, walkers, and others yield to equestrians
 - ♦ Bicyclists and skaters yield to walkers
 - ♦ Bicyclists yield to skaters
 - ♦ Downhill users yield to uphill users
 - ♦ Faster users yield to slower users.