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.