

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Media coverage is a terrific way to get your message out to more people in the community. The media can help you recruit partners and participants as well as draw attention to the goal of your program. Publicity can add to the success of your events, increase audience recognition of your organization, and increase participation in your KidsWalk-to-School program.

What Makes News?

The media may be interested in many different aspects of your walk-to-school program. When you want media coverage, send information about your program or a particular program event to your local newspaper and TV station (see Tool E, p. 60) to let them know the details. Here are just a few ways to get the media involved in your program.

Walking/Bicycling Events

Invite the media to your kickoff event at the beginning of each term. In addition, you may want to send out information during the year to let them know that your community is still supporting walking to school.

Seasonal Physical Activity

Stories can be developed that highlight children walking and bicycling to school during different seasons. For example, in the winter, bundled up kids having fun on the way to school is a great way to show that a community can be in motion all year long.


(Use the Having Fun: Ideas to Generate Children's Enthusiasm section on p. 25 to spark community interest in your program.)

Children's Involvement in the Community

When you establish your program, you will find that children really care about having the freedom to walk and bicycle on their streets and, as a result, they will become more involved in their community. They will be enthusiastic about their KidsWalk-to-School program and the media may want to cover this aspect of your program.

For example, send the Pollution Stoppers results to the media to let them know that, by walking and bicycling to school, children are decreasing pollution in your neighborhood.

Be creative when drawing attention to the program. Stories of healthy and active children are interesting to everyone in the community.



Get kids involved with every part of your program—that's what KidsWalk-to-School is all about!"

Here are some helpful hints for obtaining media coverage:

- Whenever you can, meet reporters, editors, and producers face-to-face. Bring the articles and materials you want them to use in their coverage of the program.
- If a story covering the program appears somewhere, send a thank-you note to the station, paper, or magazine.
- Media can do more than merely cover a story—they can also take part in the program. Invite a television station, radio station, local cable network, or area newspaper to co-sponsor an event.
- Another interesting way to use the media to draw attention to the program is to encourage weather forecasters to include a weather-appropriate tip with their forecast; for example, they could state, “All kids walking to school tomorrow morning, bundle up in your hats and gloves . . . it’s going to be cold.”

Giving Interviews

An interview is an important way to inform the community about the KidsWalk-to-School program. Because of this, it is good to prepare thoroughly for an interview. Before speaking with the media, organize information and, if necessary, write important points about the program on notecards. Interviewers will no doubt ask questions about the program, but having key points written down and organized will help provide the most simple, clear, and easy-to-understand responses.