

TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & OP-ED PIECES

Letters to your newspaper's editor and op-ed pieces are excellent ways to advocate. Remember that a letter to the editor is generally written in response to a published article about early childhood developmental services, and should be sent promptly following publication.

Whereas, op-eds can be sent at any time because they do not have to be written in response to published articles. Keep in mind that most submissions to newspapers are edited for clarity, accuracy, punctuation, and spelling. Most opinion pieces are short and to the point – they're rarely over 300-400 words total. Typically the newspaper requires that the letter to the editor or op-ed piece be signed, but in some cases they will withhold the name of the writer if requested. The newspaper may also ask for your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. You might be asked to supply a photo.

The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Editorial Submission process can be found [here](#); to submit a letter to City Newspaper, call 585-244-3329 or email it to themail@rochester-citynews.com.

1. Begin your letter by stating the topic or reason for writing. If you are writing a letter to the editor, cite the specific article to which you are responding. Some newspapers also need to know the date and section in which the article you're responding to appeared.
2. After you've stated the topic, then clearly state the reasons for your interest, the position you're taking on the issue and why. If you have experience with the issue at hand, then clearly state this as well. Take this opportunity to show why the issue is relevant and important, but remember to be brief.
3. Now that you've stated your position on an issue, you need to back it up with some facts. Provide local facts, data, statistics, survey results, and anecdotes to support your point of view. Personal stories about the issue are particularly effective. Using current events in politics or quoting local authorities on the issue can also lend stronger support to your message.
4. Once you've provided evidence for your point of view, you should propose logical ways to address the issue. Perhaps just raising awareness in the community is enough, but there may be other things that people can do. You can direct the readers to a website or organization that can further their goals, provide ways for readers find more information on the issue, or tell readers to directly do something such as writing their local legislator, voting, or becoming a Kids Can't Wait Campaign Champion.
5. To close, have one sentence that summarizes your point of view on the issue so your readers have a clear reminder of your main message. Then, sign off with your name and your city and state of residence. If you were using your authority to support an issue or if your title and position is relevant, then you can state this between your name and residence.