

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Contact: Name & Organization
Phone Number
Email Address

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Prevention Professionals, Child Advocates Urge Virginians to Celebrate Children

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and (Name of Your Organization) is partnering with the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention to spread the message that ***Now is the Time: Children Can't Wait.***

This theme highlights the need for programs, services and caring citizens to commit resources, time and policies to the prevention of abuse and neglect of children throughout the Commonwealth.

Thousands of Virginia children suffer abuse or neglect every year at the hands of parents, caregivers or other adults, according to data from the Virginia Department of Social Services. Child abuse investigators received more than 30,000 reports of suspected harm from July 2008 to June 2009. Of that number, 5,921 children were determined to be victims of child abuse and/or neglect.

Studies show that home visiting programs, parenting courses, support groups and parenting education classes can play a critical role in equipping parents to nurture their families.

The 2010 Prevention Month theme, ***Now is the Time: Children Can't Wait***, highlights the need for more citizens to support programs and services that promote positive parenting, champion children and strengthen families.

Local Child Abuse Prevention Month activities this April will include:

- *(Insert the Date, Time, Location of each event your local community will host)*
- The planting of pinwheel “gardens” by organizations, schools and businesses throughout this community and across the state. The pinwheel is a new symbol for child abuse prevention and reflects childhood hope, health and happiness.

For more information on the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign or to learn more about positive parenting and how to prevent abuse and neglect, visit www.pcav.org. Information on Virginia's child abuse prevention efforts can also be obtained at www.dss.virginia.gov. To report suspected abuse and neglect, contact the Virginia Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-552-7096. (Language line available)



HOW TO PITCH YOUR STORY TO THE MEDIA

Busy reporters and editors want three questions answered before they'll decide whether your story idea is worth considering:

- 1) Why is this news?
- 2) Why is it important right now?
- 3) Who cares about this? (Will this appeal to many readers?)

Nonprofit organizations rarely produce "breaking news"; however, the work you do is important. **Here are tips to help you land media coverage:**

- * Add a human interest angle to your story idea to support the facts and figures you want to share. For example, can you highlight a person in your organization, parents' group or home visiting program who has succeeded against the odds or given 110 percent in some unique and interesting way?
- * Consider whether your organization is doing something original that has a "Wow" factor. This could land the story on the newspaper's front page or at the top of the TV news hour.
- * Add a celebrity or high profile community resident to pique the media's interest.
- * Be part of the solution. The media hear a lot about the negative impact of the issues we seek to address. Try to position your cause as a rare "good news" story.
- * Find a local angle for a national news story.
- * If you're hosting a special event that will feature a neat visual, such as children planting a pinwheel garden, send press releases to media outlets informing them about photo opportunities. Smaller newspapers in your area may be willing to print pictures you shoot.
- * Be respectful, yet persistent. Email or fax your press release, then follow up with a phone call a few days later. Never call a daily newspaper or TV reporter after 3:30 p.m., since most are on deadline in late afternoons.
- * Try to build a relationship with the local media, by touching base routinely to ask about their news needs - when you're NOT trying to pitch a story. They'll be more likely to remember you when they're on deadline, or otherwise need someone to feature or quote.

Excerpts from *Robin Hood Marketing*

