

How to Involve Local Spokespersons

A fundamental step for involving the media and generating local support is to identify and train representatives to conduct media interviews and honor speaking engagements during Child Abuse Prevention Month and throughout the year.

Selecting Spokespersons

The ideal spokesperson is often the person at your organization or in your community who is most knowledgeable about issues related to child abuse prevention. Identifying a single spokesperson helps the public put a “face” on the issue. The reality is, however, that most people are committed to other tasks and personal responsibilities. Therefore, it is important to select and prepare backup spokespersons to ensure that no speaking engagement or media opportunity is missed.

Spokespersons should:

- * Be personable and at ease when speaking publicly.
- * Have a clear, pleasant speaking voice.
- * Be an interesting conversationalist.
- * Have some public speaking experience and, preferably, experience talking with members of the media.
- * Have a working knowledge about issues related to child abuse prevention.
- * Be “fast on their feet” and able to handle nonscripted responses.

Preparing Spokespersons

When making appearances or conducting interviews, your spokesperson should be prepared with:

- * General information about child abuse prevention.
- * Answers to questions about national prevention efforts and your State or local activities and involvement. Encourage him or her to review the materials contained in this resource packet and online from the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>) or Prevent Child Abuse America (www.preventchildabuse.org).
- * A local or national telephone number that people can call for more information.
- * A press kit, for reference. Include talking points in the kit. Talking points are a single page of bulleted messages that the spokesperson should mention. (See Sample Talking Points, page 23.)

When scheduling media interviews and speaking engagements, provide the reporter or organization with a paragraph-long biographical sketch for the spokesperson (not a full resume) that includes the credentials that qualify him or her as an “expert.” The reporter or organization will use the sketch to introduce your speaker.

