

CREATING A PRESS LIST

As you prepare to hold an event, it will be critically important for you to have a strong press list readily available. **Now is the time to compile this list.** This list will enable you to reach out quickly to the appropriate reporters, editors and producers at your local TV and radio stations and newspapers. It is better to take the time necessary to create such a list now rather than when you frantically need to reach a reporter. Being able to go down a list will make it feel so much easier at the time of event planning! National Foster Care Month (www.fostercaremonth.org) offers the following are the steps you can take easily to create a press list that will help you obtain press attention for your event and issues surrounding foster care.

1. Figure out if a current listing of education, parenting, social issues and children/youth reporters, editors and producers for your local area already exists. It is possible that your school system's administrative offices, or local education association, already have such a list. If the existing list is more than six months old, it is important that you call all names on the list to make sure they are still covering issues like foster care. Reporters and editors tend to be very mobile and may have moved to another area and might be covering an entirely different issue. You can't count on the goodwill of reporters to pass along a story to someone more interested in covering it. Frequently, if you don't reach the correct person, your information will be thrown out. And it is not enough to fax materials to "Education Reporter;" it is far better to get a name.

2. If a good list of reporters does not exist, it is not difficult to create one. Begin by looking in your local phone book for listings of TV and radio stations and local daily and weekly newspapers and even magazines. Call the numbers listed and ask the receptionist for the following information: name of the person(s) most likely to cover foster care, along with their address, phone and fax numbers and email. Sometimes the receptionist won't know and will put you through to the newsroom directly. That's okay – state who you are and ask for the information you need. If you are put through to the reporter, ask if he or she prefers to receive information via e-mail, fax or mail. Make sure that preference is added to your list. In most cases, the assignment editor decides what is "news." However, for each media outlet, your list should include:

- ◇ Assignment Editor
- ◇ Reporter
- ◇ City Editor or News Director
- ◇ Bureau Chief
- ◇ Daybook or Daily Calendar Editor
- ◇ Editorial Page Editor
- ◇ Living/Lifestyle or Community Editor
- ◇ Features Editor
- ◇ Public Services Director
- ◇ Producers

3. Remember to include local cable access TV, university radio stations and newspapers, and public broadcasting stations in your area on your list. If a TV station is not physically located in your community, but does serve your community, make sure to add someone from that station to your list. And, if you have a bureau of the wire services Associated Press, Reuters or UPI in your community, add them to the list.

4. Make sure to add to your list any reporters who have covered foster care in the past, even if they no longer do. For example, an anchor person who once did a story about foster care should receive information about pertinent foster care stories. She might be in a position to influence a producer to get the story covered. Also, read or scan your local or city newspapers on an ongoing basis and note reporters who cover stories about foster care or child welfare.

5. And, finally, add “Assignment Editor” to your list of all stations in addition to named reporters, editors and producers. The Assignment Editor is the person who sifts through all potential news stories and assigns reporters to cover them. He or she should receive all press mailings just to make sure nothing slips through the cracks. Once your press list is created, you will be ready when you send out announcements, advisories and news releases.