



Media Tool Kit for Children's Week Local Coordinators

Thank you for choosing to dedicate your time and resources to Children's Week! This Media Tool Kit was created to assist you in promoting your local events in the media and gaining the coverage to successfully raise awareness and advocate for children's issues.

If you have any questions about the contents of this kit or how to utilize it, please contact Mary Anne Eades at maryanne@liquidcreativestudio.com. For questions about Children's Week or your role in the initiative, contact Jason Zaborske at jz@childrensweek.org or Elise Caruthers at elise@childrensweek.org.

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Media relations: The basics

The job of a Children's Week local coordinator is to get people to come to the events to raise awareness for children's issues. But what if you don't know where to start to gain media coverage? This kit will help you interact with the media so that they will be more likely to write about your event and highlight Children's Week issues. There are several best practices to utilize when working with the media.

What is newsworthy?

Your job is to find the newsworthiness of your event or story and convince the media that the community wants to read about it. There are several news elements to keep in mind as you're creating the event and press release.

- **Impact:** Highlight how many people the event affects and what it means to them.
- **Timeliness:** Send the media information before your event and follow up after.
- **Prominence:** Whenever possible, include well-known people in the event.
- **Proximity:** Contact the media that distribute to an audience who is near the event geographically, and/or to media with target publics that care about the issue.
- **Unusual:** Focus on what makes this event different from similar ones. The media wants to know what is unexpected or peculiar that will draw audience attention.
- **Conflict:** Keep in mind that the media loves focusing on conflict. If your event is controversial, give them other, more important aspects to focus on.
- **Money:** A reporter will always ask you how much it cost and where the money is allocated. Know the answers and give them that information up front.
- **Human interest:** Many of the stories written about Children's Week events will focus on success stories to entertain the audience. Identify them to pitch to the media.

Who should you contact?

Consider the target audiences of the media you are contacting. If those audiences would be interested in the event you are hosting for Children's Week, then the publication will be interested in covering that event.

What if the media isn't interested?

Perhaps you pitched to the wrong editor. Many news sources have certain reporters who cover particular "beats" or areas of interest. Don't send a Children's Olympics event advisory to an editor in charge of the business or crime sections.

If the right editor or reporter still isn't interested, ask why and re-pitch in a few weeks with improved news value.

Remember, reporters are people too and appreciate a great story idea.

Children's Week Fact Sheet

What is Children's Week?

The Children's Week concept began as the legacy of Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles, a distinguished child advocate. It has transformed into a weeklong event in Tallahassee with thousands of attendees. Local coordinators execute events throughout the year to raise awareness about children's issues and the event in Tallahassee.

An iconic part of Children's Week has become the "Hanging of the Hands." Tens of thousands of paper hands, decorated by children and their teachers, will be collected and hung throughout the Capitol Rotunda on April 6.

What is the purpose?

The purpose of this weeklong celebration from April 6 to 11 and the local events that lead up to it is to advocate to legislators for Florida children being healthy, educated and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Who attends and what do they do?

Thousands of students, teachers and families gather at the Capitol for workshops, an awards dinner, hanging of the hands ceremony, guided tours, a reading corner, and more. Find a schedule of events at www.childrensweek.org/events.

How is it funded?

Children's Week has partnered with dozens of organizations that support the purpose of this event. A notable sponsor is ClearChannel. It assists with local events by promoting radio PSAs and event listings for all Children's Week events and activities statewide. A full list of sponsors can be found at www.childrensweek.org/partners.

What are the results from previous years?

Children's Week has served as a platform for many different issues and voices to come to the State Capitol and have their voices heard. Besides the impact the event has on allocation of funding and legislative items for specific children's programs and services over the years, Children's Week has also been instrumental in starting the Florida Children & Youth Cabinet (for more information: www.flgov.com/childrens-cabinet/) and most recently, the Florida Youth Commission (for more information: www.childrensweek.org/floridayouthcommission).

Media Plan Timeline

Use this timeline as a guideline, not a strict set of rules. Keep editors informed about Children's Week, but be sensitive to when they are interested or not. Remember that they are only interested in what benefits them, so keep the newsworthiness relevant. Reporters are always in search of a great story, and sometimes they need filler stories, so give them what they need.

Always remember to express gratitude to the editors when they express interest or publish a story. Show them your passion for children's issues. Editors and reporters are people too.

This week

- Send Jason Zaborske your local event information to be included on the website, Facebook and other mediums.
- Call your local media outlets to ask how you can list your local event on the events calendar.
- Review this **toolkit** carefully and begin writing your individualized press releases and advisories.

Four weeks prior to your local event

- Using the example **news release** as a starting point, develop a **news release, news advisory and PSA** for your local media outlets about Children's Week, focusing on the event happening in your town. If needed, send a complete draft to Mary Anne Eades at maryanne@liquidcreativestudio.com for edits and revisions.
- Develop a media advisory for your local event using the example format.
- Collect the names, phone numbers and email addresses for the local editors in charge of covering social service issues, community events, features and other related beats.

One week prior to your local event

- Send the press release and media advisory by email to the editors. Don't forget to include your contact information.
- The next day, call each editor to ensure he or she received the email. Ask if they have any additional questions or if you can provide any assistance.

Two days prior to your local event

- Follow up by phone again with each editor and/or the assigned reporter and ask if they plan to cover the event.
 - Yes: Thank them and ask if they need any additional information.
 - No: Ask why and respond accordingly. Suggest that they send a photographer for a picture in the community or features section. If they still refuse, ask them to highlight a children's issue during Children's Week.

Day of your local event

- Keep an eye out for reporters, welcome them and make sure you remain available to answer any questions they have.
- Direct reporters toward human interest stories or interesting people at the event.
- Give each reporter your business card for easy access when they write the story later.

Week after your local event

- Email Jason Zaborske at jz@childrensweek.org with any published stories about your event.
- Follow up the media coverage with **letters to the editors** thanking the publication for covering an event that raises awareness about children's issues. Promote Children's Week in the Capitol April 6 to 11. A letter to an editor is written *in response* to an article that was published in the last seven days, so reference the article published about your event and/or Children's Week in your letter.

Week of March 17

- Contact the reporters who covered your local event and remind them about Children's Week coming up. Do at least one of the options below to increase Children's Week awareness.
 - **Option 1:** Ask if the newspaper will let you write guest editorials the week before or the week of Children's Week. For example, one community newspaper ran a guest editorial from different Children's Week partners over a five-day period dealing with a different issue each day: juvenile justice, early education, etc.
 - **Option 2:** Ask the newspaper editor to write his or her editorial piece about Children's Week and highlight the needs of the children in your community.
 - **Option 3:** Get community leaders to write letters the week before or week of Children's Week to the editor highlighting the needs of children locally.
 - **Option 4:** Contact local radio station talk shows. Ask them to designate one show to children's issues the week before or week of Children's Week.

Week of March 31

Note: Unlike print publications, television stations often work on a daily, and even hourly, basis and will not likely commit to a story until they have a last minute time slot become available. Keep them informed and be ready to adjust to fit their schedule.

- Call your local television contact, or just ask for the news desk, and tell them your group is traveling to Children's Week. Invite them to attend with your group. If they cannot attend, ask them to contact their sister station in Tallahassee to get footage for them.

Steps for Hosting the Ideal Local Event

1. Contact people on the **list of local partners** interested in collaborating on a local event. Also, contact other interested parties who may not be listed.
2. Set up a planning meeting or conference call to get input from volunteers to begin the planning process. We can help you set up a conference call.
3. The inclusion of all groups advocating for all issues affecting children ages 0 to 18 is necessary. Everyone should be able to participate in a Children's Week Event.
4. Contact your local City Hall, City or County Commissioners Chambers, courthouse, or government building to reserve inside and outside space for the event, if needed.
5. Follow the local event media plan located in the coordinator toolkit to gain maximum media exposure and promotion for your event.
6. Invite all local surrounding children's advocacy organizations to join the festivities by hosting a booth with promotional materials and an interactive kids activity. This is a good opportunity for kids to create the hand artwork to be sent to the Capitol and hung in the Rotunda during Children's Week.
7. Invite local legislators and government officials to the event. Offering your elected officials the chance to interact directly with the children, such as through a reading event, is a great way to gain their participation.
8. Invite local childcare centers and schools to participate in the event.

Local Event Ideas

Over 100 events were hosted last year in communities across Florida to help raise awareness about Children's Week. Listed below are some events that other local coordinators have conducted leading up to Children's Week that have proven successful. Feel free to gather ideas here but tailor an event that will work best in your community.

Inform the media about whatever event you decide to host and contact them using tactics listed earlier in this kit.

Please contact Jason Zaborske at jz@childrensweek.org for more information about how to implement these event ideas.

County Fairs

Set up a booth for kids to cut out and decorate paper hands for the Hanging of the Hands ceremony. Fair booths are usually free of charge for nonprofit organizations. Most fairs last a week so you can use a rotating schedule with volunteers to man the booth. This is a great way to collect more paper hands to deliver to Tallahassee.

Day at the Museum

Partner with your local museum to offer a "free day" for kids and families. Set up a booth in the lobby for kids to decorate paper hands.

Firehouse Tours

Partner with your local fire station to host a day where parents and schools can bring their kids to tour the station and trucks. Again, ask kids to decorate paper hands after the tour. Ensure that all the parents and teachers know about Children's Week.

Press Conference at City Hall

Collect paper hands from the schools, childcare centers, churches and families in your community and have a local Hanging of the Hands ceremony. Ask the mayor or other public official to give a speech relating to Children's Week and a particular children or family issue that affects your community.

Family Day at the Park

This event could include crafts and activities, and even a picnic sponsored by a local restaurant. Offer information to the parents that come about Children's Week and the legislation in the Capitol that affects their kids.

Advocacy Fair

Invite all the nonprofits in the area to host booths and interact with the community children. These booths could be related to nutrition, volunteer, sports, reading, education, etc.

Valentine's Day Celebration

Ask children in a local school to make cards for elderly in a local nursing home. Coordinate a field trip for a group of students to deliver the cards to the care center on Friday, February 14. The kids could then play games and sing songs with the residents.

Concerts and Parades

Host a local children's performance in the local park for anyone under 18 years old. Contact the local music and drama teachers in the county to recruit participants.

Readings

Host book readings at your local library and ask a public official such as the mayor, police chief, or fire chief to read books to the kids. Post a notice in your local library, grocery stores and post offices. Collect books in the weeks before this event to distribute to the kids who attend.

Meals

Host a breakfast, lunch or dinner on a weekend where children volunteers will act as chefs, hosts and servers for attendees. You may charge an entrance fee to cover the cost of the food. Ask attendees to dress in a theme whether silly or formal. Ideas include clown costumes or Hawaiian. Invite local legislators and elected officials to become involved.

Sporting or Fitness Events

Host a Children's Olympics with various competitive games. Recruit local sponsors to help cover costs if needed.

Children's Week Flyer



PROMOTE THE
health, safety & well-being
OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES
in Florida

Children's Week in Tallahassee

Advocacy Training Workshop
March 27 • 12 to 1:00 p.m. & 7 to 8 p.m.

'Hanging of the Hands'
April 6 • 12:30 - 4 p.m.

Awards Dinner & Reception
April 7 • 5 to 8 p.m.

Children's Week Breakfast
April 8 • 8 to 10 a.m.

Press Conference & Dedication Ceremony
April 8 • 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Legislative Reading Corner
April 8 • 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Children's Week Luncheon
April 8 • 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Youth Advocacy Workshop
April 8 • 1 to 2:30 p.m.

On April 8,
visit more than 100 educational
and interactive booths during
"Children's Capitol for a Day"

Register Today!

Free Books • Free Guided Tours
Free Breakfast • Free Lunch
Free local events & activities
across the state
and your community!



childrensweek.org

info@childrensweek.org 850.222.3868

#childrensweek



Invitation to legislator or community leader

A letter to the editor is more likely to be read and appreciated if a community leader or legislator pens it. Use these letters as a base for the request that you send to your local senator or representative. Keep the letter brief. If needed, include the Children's Week fact sheet with the letter. Use several methods of communication to reach your legislator – email, letter, phone, social media or even in person. It is his/her job to understand what is important to the constituents.

Writing to a senator

Find your local senator using the tool at this link: www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find

[Current date] March 15, 2014

Senator (First name) (Last name)
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

RE: Please write letter to the editor about [children's issue]

Dear Senator (last name):

[Identify yourself] My name is _____, and I am resident of your district and also a local coordinator for Children's Week.

[Explain the issue concisely] Children's Week, taking place April 6-11, represents what thousands of your constituents believe in: advocating for the right of children in [insert district] to be healthy, educated and happy. The issue of [insert issue important to you] is particularly alarming.

[Insert facts relating to issue]

[State your request] Raising awareness about these issues is key to making legislative change in our district and across the state. Please consider writing a letter to the editor of our local paper advocating for [insert children's issue important to you].

[Explain how his/her action would help] Your opinion is valued and your letter to the editor is likely to be published. A simple letter advocating for [children's issue] would make a big difference in our area.

[Give thanks for his/her consideration] I know that you value the opinions of your constituents and appreciate you considering writing a letter to [editor's name] at [name of newspaper].

[Include return envelope and contact information] I've included an addressed and stamped envelope to my local newspaper. If you would prefer to email it, the [newspaper name] editor's email address is [email address]. I look forward to reading your letter in the paper.

Sincerely,

[Sign your name]
[Type your name]

[Your address
Your City, State and Zip Code
Your phone number]

Writing to a state representative

Find your local representative using the tool at this link: www.house.gov/representatives/find/

[Current date] March 15, 2014

The Honorable (First name) (Last name)
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

RE: Please write letter to the editor about [children's issue]

Dear Representative (last name):

[Identify yourself] My name is _____, and I am resident of your district and also a local coordinator for Children's Week.

[Explain the issue concisely] Children's Week, taking place April 6-11, represents what thousands of your constituents believe in: advocating for the right of children in [insert district] to be healthy, educated and happy. The issue of [insert issue important to you] is particularly alarming.

[Insert facts relating to issue]

[State your request] Raising awareness about these issues is key to making legislative change in our district and across the state. Please consider writing a letter to the editor of our local paper advocating for [insert children's issue important to you].

[Explain how his/her action would help] Your opinion is valued and your letter to the editor is likely to be published. A simple letter advocating for [children's issue] would make a big difference in our area.

[Give thanks for his/her consideration] I know that you value the opinions of your constituents and appreciate you considering writing a letter to [editor's name] at [name of newspaper].

[Include return envelope and contact information] I've included an addressed and stamped envelope to my local newspaper. If you would prefer to email it, the [newspaper name] editor's email address is [email address]. I look forward to reading your letter in the paper.

Sincerely,

[Sign your name]
[Type your name]

[Your address
Your City, State and Zip Code
Your phone number]

Request to participate in hands decoration

[Date]

Recipient name

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Friends:

Children's Week advocates for the well-being of children in Florida and is scheduled to take place in Tallahassee from Sunday, April 6, 2014 to Friday, April 11, 2014. Thousands of parents, children, professionals, advocates, community leaders and concerned citizens will come together to focus their attention on issues that affect the health and well-being of children and families in Florida.

As a child service provider, we would appreciate your support. To make this year's event a success, and raise an even greater awareness about the importance of advocating on behalf of our children, you can participate in the "Hanging of the Hands" ceremony. This ceremony takes place on the Capitol Courtyard on Sunday, April 7, but we need decorated cut outs of hands from the children at your center to put on display.

You can participate by either mailing us hands decorated by your children or driving them to the State Capitol yourself as a field trip. Children's artwork will be collected at child care centers and schools throughout the state and must be submitted no later than **Friday, March 28**. The artwork will help focus attention on the importance of children's issues by demonstrating how many children legislation affects.

Instructions for the hand artwork are enclosed.

Also, we would love for you to bring your kids to visit the Capitol and enjoy the Children's Capitol for a Day on Tuesday, April 9 which will offer kids of all ages the opportunity to take a guided tour of the State Capitol, meet their local legislators, receive a free boxed lunch, participate in fun and educational activities, and receive a wonderful civics lesson.

In addition, there will be amazing children's performances, a "Teens" Town Hall Meeting, and a Legislative Reading Corner where can read and provide books to kids. As always, there will be fun, interactive and educational activities at booths hosted by our non-profit partners in the Capitol Courtyard.

If you would like to participate in this event, you must RSVP by March 29 with your contact information and the number of children and staff in your group so that we can provide a lunch for everyone. Please contact me, Jason Zaborske, at 850-222-3868 or jz@childrensweek.org.

Sincerely,

Jason Zaborske

Children's Week Statewide Coordinator

“Hanging of the Hands” Artwork Instructions

Artwork due by: Friday, March 28, 2014

Hanging of the Hands: Sunday, April 6, 2014

Please use the following instructions to submit children’s hand artwork:

Children’s hand artwork should be stapled onto string or ribbon **vertically** in lengths of 8, 10 or 12 feet. **Hands must be hung vertically and strung together before mailing.** Please secure hands firmly and do not send separate hands without connecting them together. Please do not have providers make large signs. Attaching small pictures or posters is fine, no larger than 8 ½”x11” or 11”x14”.

All artwork must be postmarked no later than **Friday, March 28** and mailed to:

Early Learning Coalition of Big Bend Region
c/o Children's Week Hands
1940 North Monroe Street, Suite 70
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Please include the contact information, organization and county the hands are being sent from.

If you plan to assist with the hanging of the hands on **Sunday, April 6 from 12:30 to 4 p.m.**, volunteer orientation will take place on **Friday, April 4, 2014 from 12:30 to 3 p.m.** Registered volunteers will receive detailed instructions to help the entire process, not just with hanging your own artwork. To volunteer, please fill out the Children’s Week Volunteer Form at www.childrensweek.org/volunteer on the Children’s Week website.

If you have any questions, please contact Jason Zaborske at jz@childrensweek.org or Elise Caruthers at elise@childrensweek.org.



How to write an effective news release

The purpose of a news release is to pitch a news story to an editor in the hopes that he or she will assign a reporter to cover your issue or event. A press release should spoon feed the reporter everything needed to write an interesting news story using clear and accurate language. Do not waste the editor or reporter's time by writing a lengthy or exaggerative release.

Editors see dozens of news releases each day, so take your time formulating an engaging release.

Tips:

- Include contact information, including how you can be reached during the event.
- Use a headline that catches attention without exaggeration. Refer to the news values for guidance.
- Get straight to the point in the first paragraph. Answer who, what, when, where, why and how as quickly as you can. Start with the most important information.
- Use an active voice with strong verbs.
- Include a quote or two from a spokesperson or other notable person.
- Usually, releases should be one to one and a half pages long.
- Spell check, grammar check, and eliminate flowery language.
- When sending via email, copy and paste the release into the body of the email to eliminate the extra step opening an attachment. Make it as easy as possible for the reporter.

News Release Format:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Date]

Primary contact
information

Catchy/Newsworthy Headline

Creatively elaborate on headline with additional detail

City, STATE – The introduction paragraph should answer who, what, when, where, why and how as best possible.

Body: Additional details with most important information earlier in the release and the less important information near the end.

###

Boilerplate: Background information on Children's Week in smaller font with Jason Zaborske's contact information.

Sample News Release 1 – Larger Event

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2014

Contact: Jane Doe
janedoe@childrensweek.org
352-222-2222

Alachua Hosts Children’s Olympics

Games to raise awareness about Children’s Week in Tallahassee

Alachua, FL – Almost 100 children are expected to compete in half a dozen games on Saturday, March 15 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hal Brady Recreation Complex in a local Children’s Week event.

The Olympic Games will include ancient style games like running, discus throwing and jumping, as well as more modern games like cycling, golf and a football toss. Children, ages 7 to 15, must register by 8:30 a.m. day of to participate in the events.

A male and female winner in each category will receive a medal and \$25 gift card to Walmart, as well as be recognized on the Children’s Week Facebook page.

“This is the first year the City of Alachua has hosted an event like this, and we’re excited to see how the community receives it,” said Jane Doe, spokesperson for the event. “We really want people to connect this event with the Children’s Week event in the Capitol and hope the attendees help us advocate for children’s issues.”

The purpose of the Alachua event is to raise awareness for Children’s Week in Tallahassee, on April 6 to 11, and encourage participation in this large-scale event. Children’s Week advocates to legislators to vote for bills that increase Florida children’s well-being, health and education. The Children’s Olympics focuses mainly on the importance of childhood health and fitness.

This event is one of hundreds of local events that highlight the weeklong Children’s Week event in April. This event is funded by several local sponsorships, which can be found on the event’s Facebook page, Alachua Children’s Olympics for Children’s Week.

###

This year is the 19th Annual Children’s Week in Tallahassee, and thousands of people are expected to attend the event April 6 to 11. Participants of Children’s Week advocate for children’s issues such as early education, proper nutrition, stable home environments and juvenile justice. For more information about Children’s Week, go to www.childrensweek.org or contact the statewide coordinator Jason Zaborske at 850-222-3868 or jz@childrensweek.org.

Sample News Release 2 – Small Event

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2014

Contact: Jane Doe
janedoe@childrensweek.org
352-222-2222

Children from Helping Hearts Day Care Creates Largest Craft of the Year They plan to create a craft chain of over 300 hands to support Children’s Week

High Springs, FL – The 150 children at Helping Hearts Day Care plan to cut out and decorate two hands each on Friday in an effort to support Children’s Week in Tallahassee in April.

The cut out hands will be strung together with ribbon in a chain that Jane Doe, the day care owner, estimates will be 150 feet long. The center has never done a collective art project before.

The string of hands will then be delivered to Tallahassee on April 6 with the children from the day care center following on Tuesday, April 8 for a field trip to Children’s Week. The hands created by the children at Helping Hearts will be on display with thousands of other paper hands created by children across the state in a display called “Hanging of the Hands.”

“Children often do not have a say in legislative changes,” Doe said. “But by hanging thousands of small hands in the Capitol Rotunda, it shows our representatives the number of children the decisions made in Tallahassee really affect.”

Children’s Week provides registered individuals and groups a free lunch, guided tours of the Capitol, a Legislative Reading Corner where legislators will read and give away books, and civic lessons.

For more information about attending and reporting on this craft project, contact Jane Doe at janedoe@childrensweek.org or 352-222-2222.

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How to write a news advisory

A media advisory, or media alert, only includes the most basic information about your event. These advisories are developed to send to TV and radio media only. It answers who, what, when, where, why and how very succinctly and reads more like an invitation.

Tips:

- If a photo opportunity is available, say it.
- Include contact information.
- Include the Children’s Week boilerplate (organization information) at the end.
- Don’t elaborate or use flowery language.
- When sending via email, copy and paste into the body of the email rather than including as an attachment.

Format:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Date]

Primary contact
information

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

ATTN: Assignment editors, reporters [or specific name if you know one]

Headline

CITY – Paragraph introducing the event to include who many people will attend/how many it will affect, etc.

The media is invited to attend the event. Photo opportunities are available. Local coordinator Jane Doe will be available to accommodate reporters and offer any assistance needed.

WHAT:
WHEN:
WHERE:
WHO:
PURPOSE:

###

Children’s Week boilerplate

Sample Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2014

Jane Doe
janedoe@childrensweek.org
352-222-2222

****MEDIA ADVISORY****
ATTN: News desk

Alachua Hosts Children's Olympics
Games to raise awareness about Children's Week in Tallahassee

ALACHUA – On March 15 at 9 a.m. The City of Alachua is hosting an Olympic Games for the children in the area to raise awareness about children's issues affecting by legislature. This local event is also to raise awareness for Children's Week, a statewide, weeklong event in Tallahassee from April 6 to 11.

The media is invited to attend the event. Photo opportunities are available. Local coordinator Jane Doe will be available to accommodate reporters and offer any assistance needed.

WHAT: Children's Olympics for Children's Week

WHEN: Saturday, March 15 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WHERE: Hal Brady Recreation Complex

WHO: About 100 kids and their families are expected to attend. Anyone from the community is welcome.

PURPOSE: To raise awareness about children's issues affected by legislature, and to raise awareness and involvement in Children's Week.

MORE INFORMATION: Visit the event Facebook page: Alachua Children's Olympics for Children's Week.

###

This year is the 19th Annual Children's Week in Tallahassee, and thousands of people are expected to attend the event April 6 to 11. Participants of Children's Week advocate for children's issues such as early education, proper nutrition, stable home environments and juvenile justice. For more information about Children's Week, go to www.childrensweek.org or contact the statewide coordinator Jason Zaborske at 850-222-3868 or jz@childrensweek.org.

How to write a PSA

You can still utilize public service announcements for your local event, especially with our statewide radio partner ClearChannel. Depending on your local radio station, you must send either a ready-to-air audio clip or simply a script that the station's host will pre-record. Call your station and ask about their guidelines and likelihood of airing your particular PSA.

Every radio station is required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve “in the public interest” and many of them use PSAs to fulfill this requirement. The airtime is donated, but that means the spot might not play at the best times of day and other nonprofits are competing for the same free airtime. PSAs must be for a non-commercial and/or nonprofit organizations and are often only 15 or 30 seconds long.

Tips:

Before writing your PSA, answer these questions:

- What is the purpose of this PSA?
- Who is the target audience?
- Which media outlets would reach that audience best?

Before submitting the PSA:

- Read it aloud at a normal pace several times.
- Proof carefully. Capitalized letters are not spell checked in Microsoft Word.
- Confirm with the radio station that the PSA is in the format it accepts and make changes if needed.

When submitting the PSA:

- Contact the station manager personally if possible, or at least speak to someone who delegates airtime.

Format:

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Time: [10, 20 or 30 seconds]

Start date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stop date: [Day after your local event]

Organization: Children's Week

Title: [Insert title of announcement]

TYPE THE CONTENT OF THE SCRIPT IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. SPELL OUT NUMBERS, DO NOT USE ABBREVIATIONS, AND TYPE PHONETICALLY FOR WORDS THAT MAY BE MISPRONOUNCED.

###

Sample PSA

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Time: 30 seconds

Start date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stop date: March 16, 2014

Organization: Children's Week

Title: Alachua hosts Children's Olympics to raise awareness about Children's Week

BRING YOUR KIDS TO THE ALACHUA CHILDREN'S OLYMPICS! ON MARCH FIFTEENTH AT NINE A.M. AT HAL BRADY RECREATION COMPLEX, KIDS WILL COMPETE IN OLYMPIC STYLE GAMES LIKE THE DISCUS THROW! THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND FREE. HAVE YOUR CHILD, AGES SEVEN TO FIFTEEN REGISTERED BY EIGHT THIRTY A.M. TO COMPETE. CHILDREN'S WEEK ADVOCATES IN TALLAHASSEE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY RIGHTS, AND THE ALACHUA CHILDREN'S OLYMPICS IS HELPING RAISE AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION FOR THIS EVENT IN APRIL. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: ALACHUA CHILDREN'S OLYMPICS FOR CHILDREN'S WEEK OR CALL JANE DOE AT 352-222-2222.

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Utilizing the Children's Week Website

Children's Week has an updated website to better help the local coordinators and interested media find the information they need. Below are a few things to note that will hopefully help you this year:

Schedule of Events

Find exact dates, times, locations and details for the 2014 event in Tallahassee.

Local Events by County

Search for local events to discover what others are doing, help brainstorm for ideas of your own, and make sure your event is listed.

Partners

Discover our current partners or apply to become one.

Get Involved: Become a Volunteer

Find the online submission form to become a volunteer. Please share this link with your contacts who may be interested in this opportunity: childrensweek.org/volunteer

Media: Blog

Need more content to post on your Facebook Event about Children's Week? Share the link to our latest blog posts.

Social Media

Find links to each of our social media platforms in the top right corner of the website.



Utilizing the Children's Week Website

The Children's Week website provides a submission form, under the "events" tab, for local event coordinators to submit the details of his or her local event. Once submitted online, people all over the state will hear about the child and family advocacy in your community.



Event Submission Form

Children's Week would like to help you publicize and promote your local event to advocates and media outlets statewide. Your information will be posted on the Children's Week website, and in press releases, so that others can learn more about your event and attend. To have your event posted on this site and receive maximum statewide exposure, please complete and submit the information below. Submitting this form provides you with the opportunity to receive statewide visibility and exposure for your local event by working together with United Way of Florida and over 80 leading businesses and non-profit organizations across the state to promote Children's Week. You will also receive complimentary promotional materials, exclusive products, helpful toolkits, technical assistance, and the opportunity to promote your event through television and radio advertisements.

Please fill out the event form listed below and click the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Your event will be listed on the Children's Week website, as well as included in relevant news releases and on the Children's Week Facebook page!

Alachua

Below is a list of events for this county.

- **World's Greatest Baby Shower & Family Resource Festival**
Sat, Feb 22, 2014 (8:30 am - 1:00 pm)
Kiwanis and the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County along with the Child Abuse Prevention Taskforce come together to host a large event targeted to low income families with children. Event includes classes, vendors/agencies tabling, food, prizes and a diaper give-a-way. For more information, check out the ELC of Alachua's website, Facebook and Twitter.
- **Celebrate the Child - ELC of Alachua**
Sat, Apr 05, 2014 (11:00 am - 1:00 pm)

Utilizing Social Media

If someone wants to find out more about an event or organization, the first place he or she looks is the Internet. We are constantly striving to improve our online presence. By becoming more interactive and user-friendly, it will increase the amount of physical participation in Children’s Week events, which increases awareness and activism in issues relating to children and families.

Google SEO

Type “Children’s Week Florida” into the Google search bar, and the following results are generated:



The Children’s Week website, Facebook page, Twitter page, United Way affiliation, and the blog about Children’s Week on Visit Tallahassee’s website are the top results. We are making it as easy as possible for interested parties to find out information about Children’s Week.

You can help us increase Children’s Week’s SEO, or search engine optimization, by utilizing the resources we currently have online, or by creating your own affiliated sites. The more “buzz” about Children’s Week is online, the more people will hear about it.

Facebook

Facebook is the largest social media platform in the world with the widest demographic range of active users.

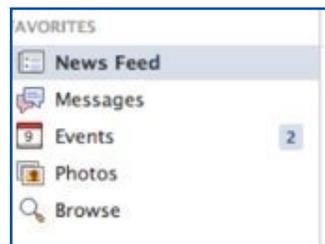
Children's Week Facebook URL: [Facebook.com/ChildrensWeek](https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensWeek)

How to create a Facebook Event for your local event:

Creating a Facebook event provides a place to direct people for more information about the event, helps generate buzz online, and helps attendees stay informed leading up to the event. Creating a Facebook event is easy, and it can be shared on your own timeline, on the Children's Week Facebook page, and more!

Step 1: Create a personal Facebook account if you don't already have one.

Step 2: Click on the "Events" tab on the left side of your screen.



Step 3: Select "Create Event" in the top right corner.

Step 4: Fill in the necessary information and select "Privacy: Public" if you want anyone to be able to see and RSVP to the event.

Step 5: Add an event photo and "invite friends."

Step 6: Add Jason Zaborske as a friend on Facebook and then invite him to the event.

Step 7: Once Jason accepts the initiation, make him a "host" for the event by clicking on "edit" and adding his name next to "Hosts."



Step 8: Jason can then share the event on the Children’s Week Facebook wall to increase your exposure!
Step 9: Post regular updates leading up to your event and tell your Facebook friends to invite their friends.

Your event page should look similar to this:



Post regularly on both your event page newsfeed, as well as interacting on the Children’s Week Facebook page. The more people who comment, like and share a post, the more Facebook users will see it.

**“Invite” your personal Facebook friends to “like” the Children’s Week Facebook page!
100 local coordinators x 10 friends each = 1,000 new Facebook fans!**

Twitter

The purpose of Twitter is to share in real time in less than 140 characters per post. Tweets should often include links to relevant articles or pictures. You can also use Twitter to converse directly back and forth using your cell phone with anyone.

Ensure that all of your Facebook posts relating to Children's Week include #ChildrensWeek and Tweet @ChildrensWeek. This will allow those at Children's Week, as well as those who follow our Twitter to see your Tweet.

Well-formulated Tweet:



The above Tweet includes all the elements of an ideal Tweet. A link, relevant hashtags and it is tagging another organization using @.

#ChildrensWeek

On all relevant social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, hashtag Children's Week by including #ChildrensWeek on the end of the post. This helps connect all of the posts across the social media platforms and identifies them with Children's Week. This hashtag is easily searchable.

TweetChat: Preschool Nation

The vision of Preschool Nation is to provide every child equal access to quality early education to better prepare them to become highly qualified professionals.



This vision aligns with goals of Children’s Week, so the two organizations are partnering to help spread the word about child and family advocacy.

The main initiative this year will be to participate in two TweetChat sessions.

TweetChats allow a group of individuals to Tweet about the same topic during a specified time using a specific hashtag, allowing the conversation to be tracked. Using TweetChat is not necessary to participate, as all hashtags can be found by searching Twitter, it will allow you to see only the Tweets with the topic hashtag, rather than all the random Tweets in your newsfeed.

Session 1*

Topic: Focus on community events and local success stories

Session 2*

Topic: Discussion of legislative topics

*We have not yet confirmed the times and hashtags for the two TweetChat sessions. These details will be provided by Jason Zaborske in advance of the sessions.

How to participate:

- Sign up for a free Twitter account at [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)
- Sign up for a free TweetChat account at [TweetChat.com](https://tweetchat.com) if you want to filter out the other Tweets in your feed.
- Ensure that you are “following” Childrens Week on Twitter
- During the specified time (see above), converse with other users using the specified hashtag (see above)

Tips for participating:

- Use the designated hashtag so people can follow the thread
- Only use the designated hashtag if the Tweet is on-topic
- If you want to respond to a comment, mention him/her by Tweeting at them: @Name
- Retweet other users content that you want to share or emphasize

By using TweetChat, it puts the “blinders” on other Tweets in the “Twitter-verse” and allows you to only focus on the Tweets relating to your topic.

YouTube

If your event is visual, consider taking a short video of something that exemplifies the mission of the event. Send the video to Jason Zaborske at jz@childrensweek.org to be posted on the Children's Week YouTube feed. We really want to beef up our YouTube presence!



Instagram

Instagram is a great, fast way to take creative pictures of your event and post on Facebook. It is a photo-sharing mobile application. Download it on your smartphone before your event and keep us updated as the event progresses! Don't forget to #ChildrensWeek!

Step 1: Download the Instagram application on your smartphone

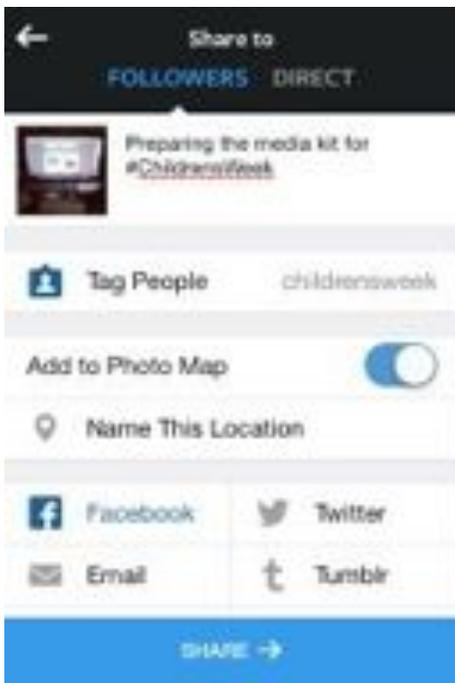
Step 2: Click on the star icon to search for other users

Step 3: Search for and follow childrensweek

Step 4: Take fun photo of your event, Children's Week preparation and hands decorating.

Step 5: Add an interesting "filter" to your photo.

Step 5: Post the photo using #ChildrensWeek AND tag childrensweek in the photo.



Media Contact Lists

A contact list for print, radio and television media has been created for your reference. Use this information as a base for the media you contact. While not every media outlet is listed, the main ones near your area should be. Research online for additional contacts in your community.

Refer to this media kit on how best to contact the editors of these outlets. Some tips to remember:

- Know exactly what you want the reporter to cover, but have a backup plan/topic as well.
- Be familiar with at least one child or family issue that is affecting your local community.
- Be sensitive to the reporters time, and provide as many details as you can so it makes it easy for him/her.

The 2014 Media Contact spreadsheets can be found on the Children's Week website, or included in the email you received that included this media kit.