

TIPS: WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

While there are no guarantees, here are some tips to get your LTE (letter to the editor) to the top of the pile:

THE BASICS

- First, feel free to [search this page](#) to find the contact information for your local paper.
- Keep it brief. For letters, 150 words is the optimal length in a mainstream newspaper. If the newspaper has a word limit for letters, be sure to stay within it (word limits are typically noted on the paper’s website).
- Include your contact information and who you are, i.e. your professional or volunteer title. Feel free to use the title that best connects to your interest in pre-k, which can certainly include your “title” as a parent.
- If you want to include a co-signer on your letter, you may. However, two signers on a letter is usually the maximum a newspaper will accept.

LETTER CONTENT

- Write from personal experience! The most effective voices for pre-k are the most genuine ones. Consider writing about any of the following: why high-quality pre-k its importance to you and your family; how access to high-quality pre-k benefited your older children and is important for other children (including your younger ones); your experience trying to find a high-quality provider in your area; your worries or concerns if your child is on a pre-k waiting list.
- Stay focused. Your piece should focus on a positive core message that emphasizes Pre-K for PA’s goal: that all 3- and 4-year-olds in PA can access a high-quality pre-k program.
- Stay positive. For example, “I stand with the majority of Pennsylvanians who know that pre-k works and believe it is essential.”
- Be bipartisan. Pre-k enjoys support from both sides of the aisle and we need all our legislators to agree on the importance of funding high-quality pre-k. The focus is making the positive case for pre-k.

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- Feel free to mention Pre-K for PA, but not too many times. Editors don't want to appear to favor a particular organization and we prefer that the focus is more on high-quality pre-k and less on us!
- Find a local angle. If there's a pre-k-related or relevant local issue, try to connect your letter to that issue. Almost all newspapers prefer letters that highlight or reference a local connection.
- Respond specifically to another article that has been published. Letters written in response to news articles or opinion pieces that have appeared in the paper typically have a better chance of being published. If possible, mention the title, author, and date of publication of the article or opinion piece to which you are responding.
- Be timely. If you are responding to an article/letter/op-ed/editorial, send in your letter as soon as possible. The sooner the paper receives your response, the greater the chances of publication.
- Avoid jargon or acronyms. This is an important note for pre-k providers or educators. Remember, just because a term is familiar to you doesn't mean others know it.

Don't be discouraged! If your LTE doesn't get published the first time you send it, don't be discouraged. The paper may already have published enough letters on a particular issue. Still, your letter will register with the editor and help establish his or her understanding of the sentiment in your community.

Need some guidance? Pre-K for PA's team is available to help. Email us at info@prekforpa.org or explore our website for ideas, facts, and good arguments for expanding high-quality pre-k access at www.prekforpa.org.