

<http://www.nhen.org/nhen/pov/editors/default.asp?id=141>

POINTS FOR GIVING AN INTERVIEW

Giving an interview, particularly when children may be involved, is something you will want to prepare for carefully. Here are some tips for working with the media.

1. Be polite, punctual, positive and persuasive!
2. Call back or arrange an interview as quickly as possible. Reporters have deadlines and if you put them off you will lose the opportunity. If a reporter wants to do a telephone interview and you aren't prepared, arrange to call back within ten minutes or so if possible.
3. Fax background information to the reporter in advance of the interview, if possible. You can help the reporter do his or her job better by providing information you would like to see in print. But keep it brief - a couple of pertinent pages is enough.
4. Be prepared. Never enter an interview without preparing yourself and any children who will be talking to a reporter. Practice what you want to say and discuss any issues with the children you do not want to address. Help them practice saying what they want to say in appropriate ways.
5. Focus on just two or three main points. You can steer the conversation by bringing it back to your topic. "The important issue here is" "What I'd like you to remember is" "My point is" are all excellent bridges to turn the conversation in a direction of your choosing.
6. Avoid making negative statements. Practice turning negative statements into positive ones. This is where those "sound bites" will come in handy. Humor, personal experience and interesting anecdotes will help. Prepare these little snippets in advance.
7. Be enthusiastic but honest. Avoid blanket statements ("Homeschooling is better than public school") and unsubstantiated data. Rephrase questions that make you uncomfortable or ones where the answer may be misinterpreted.
8. Remember to thank the reporter!