

What is an Op-Ed?*

An op-ed stands for "opposite the editorial page," where it typically appears in the newspaper. It is an opinion piece written by a regular reader, representative of a group or cause, or an elected official who is not an employee of the newspaper. Op-eds appear each day in almost every newspaper and usually weigh in on current issues, express a viewpoint, and frequently offer solutions to address those issues. Op-eds are a great advocacy tool and a way to raise awareness about children's issues—if placed, they are read by decision makers, opinion leaders and fellow citizens.

How Do You Write an Op-Ed?

Below you will find step by step instructions about how to write and "pitch" to newspapers an op-ed about children's issues.

1. Find out the length requirements and submission deadlines for op-eds for your local newspapers. In general, op-eds should range from 500-800 words, but each paper has different requirements. (You can find your local daily newspapers at congress.org.) If your op-ed gets turned down, don't forget there are other media outlets you can pitch including weeklies, specialty papers and online news or public affairs sites.
2. Research any state or local issues or stories that have recently been published concerning the issue. You should reference these articles when pitching to prove the relevancy of the op-ed (such as "Last week's story about racial isolation in schools underscores the need to sustain Connecticut's high-quality magnet schools ...").
3. Use state and local statistics throughout the op-ed to support your point of view. You can find information on magnet schools at www.ctmagnetschools.org, or you can email info@ctmagnetschools.org and we will help you locate the information you need.
4. Include a very brief one to two sentence biography at the end of the op-ed to give readers some context for the person whom is writing the piece.
5. Once the op-ed is written, you should submit it online or via fax, whichever way the newspaper says it prefers to be contacted. A few days after you submit the piece, follow up with a phone call to see if they received it and if they might be interested in running it.
6. If you would like us to read your op-ed before you submit it, please email it to info@ctmagnetschools.org.
7. If your op-ed gets placed, please let us know!

*Adapted from the Children's Defense Fund:

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/take-action/advocacy-that-works/write-an-oped.html>