



The Arc Connecticut *Families for Families* Organizing Tool Kit

"How to Write an Op-Ed"

Start your op-ed with your conclusion, making your strongest point up front and following that by making your case and back-filling with the facts. Done right, it's persuasive writing at its best.

- Focus tightly and briefly on one issue or idea in your first paragraph.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue.
- Express your opinion as based in factual, researched or first-hand information.
- Be timely and controversial, but not outrageous. Be the voice of reason.
- Be personal and conversational, even using humor as appropriate, to help make your point. No one likes a stuffed shirt.
- Provide insight, understanding: educate your reader without being preachy.
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action. Don't philosophize.
- Have verve, and "fire in the gut" indignation to accompany your logical analysis, using clear, powerful and direct language.
- Avoid clichés and jargon.
- Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.
- Write 750 double-spaced words or less (fewer is always better).
- Include a brief bio, along with your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the bottom.

Many major newspapers today accept timely op-eds by email. Check the paper's website for policy clarification.