



## PITCHING THE MEDIA FOR YOUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Following are tips, ideas, and sample language for pitching your 20th anniversary event to individual reporters. Most reporters prefer to receive pitches by e-mail rather than phone, but it is fine to follow up on a pitch by phone 2-3 days after you send the first e-mail, especially if the reporter knows you. Note that this pitch will be separate from your press release, which is sent en masse. You may choose to attach your press release to your pitch message, but the pitch is meant to be more personalized (and thus, more effective).

### First thing's first: The subject line

Pay close attention to the subject line of your e-mail when sending a pitch, as this often determines whether a reporter will open your message. The ideal subject line shows you are familiar with the reporter's work (e.g. "your series on childcare subsidies"). Here is an example of an effective subject line and first few lines of a pitch:

#### **Subject: Your March 5th story on developmental screening**

Opening lines: As an early childhood professional, I was thrilled to read your March 5 story on the need to improve developmental screening in our county. This is a topic of great interest to First 5 [county]; in fact we are hosting an event on [date] to discuss ways to improve developmental screening, as part of our 20th anniversary celebration. I hope you'll attend, as we'll have several knowledgeable speakers on hand, including X, Y, Z.

If you are unable to link your event to a recent story for the subject line, try to appeal to the reporter's sense of fun and novelty ("Join us for our 20-year anniversary event"), or sense of civic responsibility ("Learn how to support young kids in Fresno").

### General tips for the pitch

- 👉 Ideally, the topics to be discussed at your event are ones that the broad community recognizes as important. However, if there are community issues of equal or greater interest, try to tie those into the pitch to make it even more compelling. For example, if the cost of housing is top of mind in your community, tie it with your event on child care this way: "As families in the Central Valley struggle to afford ever-rising rents, the last thing they need is expensive child care. Our community forum will discuss policy solutions to the child care crisis, including ways to make quality care more affordable for low-income residents."
- 👉 Include local statistics and case studies in your pitch when possible. Compelling personal stories will often catch a reporter's interest.



## PITCHING THE MEDIA FOR YOUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

### **Pitch angle: First 5 is 20 years old**

First 5 is an important force for good in your community, and it's a big deal that First 5 has been around for two decades. Consider leading with the fact that the event marks a major milestone for young kids and families in your community. Mention a few key projects that First 5 has supported in the last 20 years, and end with the promise that the event will discuss what lies ahead.

### **Pitch angle: It's an election year, and voters value early childhood issues**

2018 is a key election year for the state and many local entities, and early childhood is an important issue this year. Polls show nearly 90% of voters want the next governor to focus more on early childhood, for example. If there is a local political issue pertaining to early childhood, promote your event as a means of meeting key players and understanding nuances.

### **Pitch angle: There is still a great unmet need for kids in our community**

First 5 has made great strides in supporting kids and families, but there is still a great unmet need. Discuss what that need looks like with statistics (% of kids needing child care, % reported for abuse and neglect, % living in poverty), and how First 5 (and its partners) proposes meeting that need.

### **Pitch angle: Interesting people at your event**

Think through the participants in your town hall and how they might be appealing to reporters. Well-known people, such as legislators or prominent civic leaders, will automatically create a draw. On the other hand, reporters also crave access to "regular folks" (i.e., members of the public who are not public servants, but who have experience with an issue they write about, such as home visiting or family clinics).

### **Pitch angle: Timely information, legislation**

If there is new or recent data or legislation related to the topic of your event, highlight that this will be discussed, and by whom (if experts and/or policymakers are attending).