



Tips for Reaching out to the Media and members of Congress

Along with helping get students outside to take part in meaningful environmental education activities, a key goal of the No Child Left Inside Days campaign is to generate media interest in environmental education and attention from members of Congress and their staffs. Below are tips for reaching out to first the media, and then Congress.

Media Outreach

1. We have developed a template media advisory and a template press release. You should modify these to meet your local needs.
2. Develop a list of media in your area – including print, radio and TV. Focus on reporters who cover either education or the environment. At smaller media outlets, a general assignment reporter would be the best bet. Create an email list for easy distribution.
3. 7-10 days before the event, email a media advisory to your press list. Follow up with phone calls to reporters or editors. Notify the Associated Press by phone and make sure they have the advisory and ask them to list the event on the AP Day Book, a planning tool used by many media outlets. Explain to reporters why this would be a good story – lots of kids getting outdoors to do cool stuff; taking part in a national awareness effort; good photographic possibilities, etc. And, if a member of Congress is coming, make sure the media knows that. (If a member is coming, you will need to coordinate any media outreach with the member's press office.)
4. Two days before the event, resend the media advisory and follow up with calls to the press.
5. Day before the event, finalize the press release and make copies to be distributed at event.
6. Day of event: bring copies of the release and information about your group and No Child Left Inside legislation.
7. Assign someone to take pictures of the event for use on your website and NCLI's.

8. At the event, help reporters get information about the No Child Left Inside Days campaign, NCLI and your organization.
9. Assemble any press coverage and be sure to let the NCLI Coalition know about it. (Please send to Erica Miller, EMiller@savethebay.cbf.org.)
10. Send any coverage with a note to your congressional delegation, and urge them to support NCLI.

Congressional Outreach

We're hopeful that all participating groups will reach out to their local member of Congress and, if possible, their senators. The best days for members to attend such events are Monday mornings and Fridays.

1. If you do not have a good contact in those congressional offices, identify the legislative assistant who handles educational issues and the scheduler.
2. Draft a formal invitation to the member, asking them to attend and take part in No Child Left Inside Days activities. Be sure to mention:
 - a. Environmental education is important and this event will highlight that.
 - b. Constituents are concerned about the environment and want their kids to be educated about it.
 - c. That you are working to generate media coverage.
 - d. That this event is supporting the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R. 3036 and S. 1981).
3. Fax or email the letters to the office with a cover note for both the legislative assistant handling education and the scheduler, who may be either in the district office or Washington, D.C. These letters should go out as far in advance of the event as possible.
4. Follow up with phone calls to both of those aides.