

LETTER TO THE EDITOR INSTRUCTIONS

A great way to spread the ASK message is through your local newspaper. Many local and regional news outlets regularly accept letters to the editor (LTEs) and opinion pieces. Use the tips below to write an LTE spreading the ASK message.

TIPS FOR PLACEMENT

1. Identify a local print or digital news outlet that you'd like to respond to.
2. When possible, tie your letter to a recent news article (such as a local gun-related tragedy, especially impacting a child) or respond to another letter.
3. Find details on how to submit an LTE on the outlet's website.
4. Keep your LTE within the publication's stated length — normally 150-200 words.
5. Customize your LTE by including a personal story, experience, or expertise.
6. Clearly state your call to action
7. Write using your own voice

INCORPORATE KEY FACTS AND TALKING POINTS

- Launched in 2000 at the Million Mom March, The ASK (Asking Saves Kids) campaign is now a marquee component of Brady's End Family Fire program. Developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the ASK Campaign is a nationwide effort to educate parents about the significant risks of children having access to guns in the home.
- ASK Day correlates with the start of summer when more kids are out of school and visiting other homes.
- Asking about guns in the home and volunteering information about how your guns are stored, helps create dialogue and trust to ensure that children are safe from unintentional shootings, firearm suicide, and other incidents of family fire or firearm misuse.
- 4.6 million children live in homes with access to an unlocked or unsupervised gun.
- Among children, 89% of unintentional shooting deaths occur in the home.
- Keeping guns locked and unloaded reduces the risk of unintentional shooting deaths and gun suicides among youth by 73%.
- Access to guns in the home increases the risk of suicide by 300%.
- 76% of school shootings are facilitated by kids having access to unsecured and/or unsupervised guns at home.



SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Every day across America, eight children and teens are unintentionally injured or killed due to an unlocked or unsupervised gun. These tragedies increase as more children are on summer vacation and spending more time at home or the homes of others. According to an [analysis](#) by [Brady](#), the nation's oldest gun violence prevention organization, half of the weeks in the year with the most unintentional shootings by children occurred during the summer. With June marking the beginning of summer, now is the time when Americans must take action to protect our kids.

[Brady](#), reminds Americans that June 21 is “Asking Saves Kids Day (ASK Day)”. By commemorating ASK Day, we prioritize our children's lives and safety by urging all parents and caretakers to ask if there are unlocked guns where children play or hang out. Parents ask all sorts of questions before their children visit other homes, including about pets and allergies. ASK Day encourages parents to add one more question: “Is there an unlocked gun in your home?”

All of us — gun owners and non-gun owners alike — have a role in preventing [family fire](#). Family fire refers to a shooting that results from someone misusing an unsecured firearm from the home. Unintentional shootings, firearm suicide, and many intentional shootings are all forms of family fire. Family fire is preventable by storing your guns safely. If safe storage practices are deployed in just 20% more households with children, we could reduce firearm suicide and unintentional firearm fatalities among youth by [up to 32%](#). For some ASKing could be the first step that encourages life-saving change.

Here in **[Community name]** we can all take the simple step of ASKing. Together, we'll make ASKing part of our routine before sending our kids off to be with friends. Raising awareness about the risks of unsecured firearms in our community will help us reshape our culture and bring ourselves closer to a future free from gun violence.

