



## Media Tracking Form

In this Section you will find:

- ❖ A description of the purpose of the Media Tracking Form, information on why it is useful, and how it should be used;
- ❖ A visual guide of selected components of the form; and
- ❖ A description of the Media Tracking Spreadsheet and a visual guide of the piloted version.

# What is the Media Tracking Form?

Media coverage is critical to the KIDS COUNT projects' ability to disseminate messages and gain support for important issues that affect children and families. KIDS COUNT projects vary in size and scope, and therefore have different levels of interaction and exposure in the media. Because media exposure is such an important tool for gaining attention and achieving progress on KIDS COUNT issues, evaluating KIDS COUNT coverage in the media is critical. The Media Tracking Form is designed to systematically track how effectively and accurately KIDS COUNT receives coverage in the media.

## Why should you use the Media Tracking Form?

The Media Tracking Form can help you answer a number of valuable questions about your organization's media coverage. These questions include:


- Is your message getting out?
- What topics are being covered?
- Is your media strategy creating a public debate about the issues?
- Is your media strategy effectively leveraging support?
- What is your general position in the media?
- What regions and populations are seeing this media coverage?
- What is the quality of the media coverage that you receive?
- What influence do your media products have on policy makers?
- How are KIDS COUNT stories placed?
- How did the story portray KIDS COUNT?



*Media Tracking Form*

## What information does the Media Tracking Form capture?

Media is a powerful tool that can have a local, national, or global impact on voicing your program's issues and topics of concern. Let's learn how the Media Tracking Form can help you monitor and optimize your organization's media coverage.

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• **Who is saying what?** What news sources and broadcasts frequently report on KIDS COUNT information? What news source represent state or national interests? What audiences are being reached?
- **What topic is being covered?** How do recent trends or current events correlate to topics that are receiving the most media attention? Identifying what topics are covered effectively reinforces what strategies could be improved to ensure that other issues are covered appropriately.
- **How is the story placed?** It is important to understand how well the news source presents KIDS COUNT, in the context of the rest of the news and information. Story placement often implies a level of interest or value. Increased visibility of KIDS COUNT issues in the press impacts your ability to influence populations.
- **What is your potential reach?** To better understand your audience, it is important to capture the potential geographic reach of your consumers.
- **What is the quality of the media coverage you receive?** It is smart to pay attention to several factors that can have a large impact on the quality of KIDS COUNT coverage: Was the article written from a thoughtful, well-rounded, informed point of view? What issues are covered, and to what extent?
- **Lastly, how did the story portray KIDS COUNT?** It is critical that you analyze *how* your message is portrayed to expand your capacity to demonstrate influence.

Was there a positive or negative spin to the tone? Did KIDS COUNT appear credible?

Below is the KIDS COUNT Media Tracking Form:

### Media Tracking Form

Initials of Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Publication Information**

Story Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of story: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication Type (circulation):

- Newspaper (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Magazine (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Newsletter (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Radio (\_\_\_\_\_)
- TV (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Online publication (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Other (\_\_\_\_\_)

Geographic Reach:

- City
- Region
- State
- National
- International

How often is it published? Daily Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly Yearly

Town/City where the media outlet is based: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of media outlet (e.g. Washington Post): \_\_\_\_\_

**Placement Information**

Story Source:

- Press release
- Press conference
- Special event
- Initiated by media
- Personal contact
- Prompted by local issue
- In response to other advocacy news

Size of article (paragraphs): \_\_\_\_\_

Size of article (inches): \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of newscast (min): \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Yes No

Of what? \_\_\_\_\_

Of what? \_\_\_\_\_

Story type:

- News story
- Feature article
- Editorial
- Column
- Letter to the editor
- Mention in a child advocacy article
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What form of media is the story presented in? Geographically, what impact does the story make?

How frequently is it published? Does the publication represent state, level, or national interests?

When considering the visibility of KIDS COUNT stories, consider how the following aspects of placement affect your coverage: type of story, story form, degree of exposure, the story's author, the presence of a photo, etc.

It is useful to know how the story was generated. What is the most useful venue to draw attention to KIDS COUNT stories?

### Coverage Analysis

What was the reason for writing the article? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did the media source find out about the issue or publication?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What policy issue(s) did the article cover?

- Poverty
- Mental Health/Well-being
- Physical Health/Well-being
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Education
- Juvenile Justice
- Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Did the media coverage involve issues you would expect? What issues tend to get the most attention?

Did the article list any advocacy groups? Yes      No

If you answered *yes* to the question above, which advocacy groups were listed?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was anyone from your organization cited in the article? Yes      No

Was the story's message one you wanted to convey? Yes      No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is critical to determine if messages about KIDS COUNT are being understood correctly.

Did the article take the same stand on the issue that your organization does? Yes      No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, did the media appear to understand the KC data they reported on?  
Yes      No

If you answered *yes* above, did the media appear to use the data correctly? Yes      No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



How prominent was Kids Count? *Check all that apply*

- Mentioned Kids Count project
- Mentioned specific product What product? \_\_\_\_\_
- Gave contact information or website \_\_\_\_\_
- Quoted a Kids Count publication
- Quoted a Kids Count representative What tables/graphs? \_\_\_\_\_
- Used Kids Count data tables or graphs \_\_\_\_\_

Was the story given a local angle? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the tone of the article? Reasonable Rhetorical

How was Kids Count portrayed?

- As experts in the field  As one among many opinions
- As a reliable source of information  As an unreliable source of information
- As one of two differing opinions  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your reaction to the story? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The media is a powerful tool when it comes to shaping public perception on an issue. When reviewing your media coverage, keep these questions in mind:**

- Who is mentioned and in what context?
- Who is quoted, how frequently and where does it occur in the story?
- How much coverage or "share of voice" does your organization receive?
- How are different individuals and groups positioned—as leaders, as followers or equal to another organization or person?
- How prominently are key organizations referred to or featured in the press coverage?
- Is KIDS COUNT or your organization cited in the headline?
- Is any emphasis given to the positives or negatives in the indicators?
- What is the overall impression of the coverage?

## Using the Media Tracking Spreadsheet:

The Media Tracking Form can help you collect large amounts of information about KIDS COUNT media coverage. Rather than tracking each story with an individual form, you may consider entering the information into a computer spreadsheet. The **Media Tracking Spreadsheet** is a very useful way to track and organize your media coverage. This document contains identical questions from the Media Tracking Form; however, each story is entered into its own row. You may want to exclusively use the Media Tracking Spreadsheet, or use it in addition to the form for several reasons:

- 1) The spreadsheet eliminates the need for completing separate and individual copies of the Media Tracking Form;
- 2) You can compile several story accounts into one compact computerized form, keeping an organized account of all media coverage over months, or even years;
- 3) The tracking of all media coverage remains highly consistent;
- 4) You can easily compare and contrast important components of each story and how it was covered, noticing media trends that occur over time; and
- 5) You can analyze data directly from the spreadsheet with Microsoft Excel.

Below are selected components of the spreadsheet, which illustrate sample information.

Kids Count Media Tracking Report														
<i>(Respondents: Please enter each media story in a new row. Place an "X" under the correct corresponding boxes and provide explanations when asked.)</i>														
Story #	Initials of recorder	Date	STORY TITLE	Basic information			Publication Information							
				Date of publication	Author	Town/city and name of media outlet	Newspaper	Magazine	Newsletter	Radio	TV	Online Publication	Other	
1	K.C.	3/21/05	"Annual Survey Shows Decline in RI Child Poverty"	1/16/05	Lauren Smith	Providence, RI "Providence Times"	X							
2														
3														
4														
5														

Enter each story in its own row. It will be easy to organize and compare various accounts of media coverage.

### Placement Information

Story Source											
Press Release	Press Conference	Special Event	Initiated by media contact	Personal Contact	Prompted by Local issue	In response to Other advocacy news	Size of Article (paragraphs)	Size of article (inches)	Duration of newscast (minutes)	Was there a photograph or graphic? yes/no	If yes, of what?
X					X		7 paragraphs	10 inches		NO	

The spreadsheet enables you to compare what sources have initiated the greatest amount of media coverage over time. This knowledge will allow you to target and optimize your general media strategy in the future.

### Coverage Analysis

Background Information		What policy issues did the article cover?							Additional Information	
What was the reason for writing the story?	How did the media source find out about the issue or publication?	Poverty	Mental Health/ Well being	Health/ Well being	Drugs and alcohol	Education	Juvenile Justice	Other (please List)	Was the story's message one that you wanted to convey? Please explain.	Did the article take the same stand on the issue as your organization does? Please explain.
New year, statistical comparison of 2004	Past coverage	X		X					Yes, the article addressed improvements in	Yes, we generally noticed this town supports our efforts to raise..
							0			

Analyzing the content of your media coverage is a valuable tool that will highlight trends of what KIDS COUNT issues are receiving attention, and how they are covered. For example, are any important issues being neglected?

Take a moment to provide some descriptive comments when tracking a story. Qualitative data provides valuable information and insight.



# Use Media to Your Advantage:



Both the **Media Tracking Form** and the **Media Tracking Spreadsheet** are designed to help you make the best out of media generated attention. Once you begin to use these tools regularly over time, you will gain the ability to:

- **Assess your media strategy.** Tracking media coverage allows projects to identify how media outlets use the information provided to generate articles covering the issues.
- **Use information to effectively frame your issue.** Members of the media frame issues differently for a variety of reasons. Projects can use the information to identify newspapers' perspectives on various issues that impact children and families, something useful to know when talking to reporters.
- **Enhance your fundraising efforts.** Media information can effectively aid development and fundraising efforts because it indicates a level of interest in issue areas among constituents and lend credibility to KIDS COUNT. In addition, stories in the media often refer to specific initiatives supported by funders.
- **Demonstrate statewide exposure.** Tracking media coverage around the state enables projects to identify how well their message is received by media outlets statewide. Widespread exposure shows funders that KIDS COUNT has statewide credibility.
- **Include media clips or quotes in your marketing.** Media coverage may include quotes of comments from legislators or supporters, which can be used in marketing materials to support initiatives or issues.
- **Send KIDS COUNT Advisory Council members copies of articles.** Keep your Advisory Board or Board of Directors updated on KIDS COUNT in the news by sending them copies of the clippings. This information can help keep them updated and inform them of where KIDS COUNT is getting covered in the news.