

## 4. CARRYING OUT A SUCCESSFUL EVENT TIPS FOR GIVING INTERVIEWS

When serving as a spokesperson for your SRTS project, it's important to keep in mind the three or four main points you want to get across in your interview. Make sure to make these key points. Work them in to your responses, regardless of the questions, and stay positive! It's OK to repeat yourself in an interview to emphasize your message.

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**Deliver your main message. An example of key talking points for a SRTS project could be:**

- A) Today is the kick-off for our new "Safe Routes to School" project at XYZ School.
- B) We've worked hard to put together an application for the federal Safe Routes to School program. Now that we've received funding, we hope to encourage more children to walk and bicycle to and from school, as it helps kids learn healthier and more active lifestyles. We're also working with the police and engineers to make conditions safer.
- C) As more and more children take advantage of walking and bicycling to school, our community will benefit from less traffic congestion, better air quality, and our kids will have a lot more fun!
- D) If you are a parent, we hope you'll get in touch with us (give website or contact person) to learn more about how your child can safely walk or bicycle to school.

**Here are the "top ten" interview tips, whether you are working with newspapers, radio or television:**

- 1. Prepare (review your talking points) and stay focused on the issues
- 2. Be concise and speak clearly
- 3. Don't speak too quickly
- 4. Be friendly and honest
- 5. Don't lose your cool
- 6. There is no such thing as "off the record" – only say it if you are willing to be quoted
- 7. Don't be led into "hypothetical" situations – you'll be taken out of context
- 8. Say what you have to say and then stop talking
- 9. Mention where people can get more information (your organization's website and [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org))
- 10. If you are asked a negative question, turn the negative into the positive, but don't repeat negative words like "dangerous" or "unsafe." Anything you say is fair game to be quoted, so make sure that you keep it positive!

**Here are some additional tips for television interviews:**

- 1. Smile!
- 2. Make eye contact (look at the reporter not the camera)
- 3. Be conversational.
- 4. Ask in advance if the interview will include the reporter's questions and your answers or just your answers. If it's just your answers, be sure to speak in full sentences when answering the questions.
- 5. Solid, dark colors look best on television. Avoid patterns and light colors.

**Regardless of the forum, it's also good to create a "sound bite." Keep in mind one phrase that you want to see in print.**