

BLACK HILLS PARENT WRITER GUIDELINES

Black Hills Parent magazine is looking for freelance writers who demonstrate a fresh, engaging writing style and a keen sense of the topics that matter to local parents. Before you pitch a story to us, we recommend you get a feel for the type of articles we value and promote.

ABOUT BLACK HILLS PARENT

Black Hills Parent is a free, full-color family and parenting magazine, published 4 times per year. As Black Hills' exclusive, all-in-one parenting resource, our readers include parents with children ages newborn through teens, as well as expectant moms, grandparents, and caregivers. We publish several stories in each issue, from articles on serious topics to pieces designed for fun and entertainment. Our writing tone is easy-to read and conversational, yet packed with plenty of impact. Through our pages, we want our readers to feel understood, supported and empowered to make healthy parenting and life choices.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We suggest writers examine our **Editorial Calendar** (below) for information concerning the proposed features/focus of each publication. We also accept submissions on topics not included in the Editorial Calendar. Our ongoing editorial needs include topics relating to parenting and families, such as: health & wellness, education, pregnancy & babies, enrichment activities, holidays, sports & fitness, nutrition, technology, special needs, parties & celebrations, green living, family travel and all ages & stages (toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, tweens & teens).

We do not accept fiction, fantasy pieces, dreamy musings or poetry.

QUERIES

We welcome story pitches, especially from local freelancers. These queries should be emailed to **editorial@blackhillsparent.com**. You may send multiple queries.

Your query should be no more than 4 paragraphs and include:

- What is the focus of the story? A brief summary written in the style of your proposed piece.
- What are some of the key points you will cover and the sources you will interview?
- Answer the "so what question." Why is this story important to our readers? Why should you be the one to tell it?
- What is the anticipated word length? (In general, feature articles should be between 650 and 800 words in length. Other articles can range between 200-400 words.)
- If you have not written for us before, include 2-3 writing samples along with your query.

Links to online stories are preferable, but PDFs are ok too.

Tips: Make your pitches detailed and concise. Pitch early. Be mindful that content for Black Hills Parent is determined months in advance. Therefore, story ideas should be pitched 2-4 months before the issue it would run. This is particularly important for seasonally anchored stories.

UNSOLICITED ARTICLES

Black Hills Parent welcomes unsolicited articles that meet our story requirements. Send the complete article to **editorial@BlackHillsParent.com**. If we are interested in your article, we will

contact you prior to publication to negotiate an acceptable rate, actual story length needed, and obtain permission for use. We do require market (Rapid City and the surrounding Black Hills communities) exclusivity.

RESPONSE TIME

Due to the frequencies of all of our publications, our response time can take several weeks. Often we consider story ideas for several issues and may delay the publication of some stories for seasonal reasons. If your query/submission is accepted, we will email you an acceptance letter that specifies deadline, word count and writer's fee.

PUBLICATION RIGHTS

With the exception of reprints, we purchase all rights to articles, including the option to republish articles in special editions or post them online at www.BlackHillsParent.com.

PAYMENT

Payment is negotiated per article and depends on the complexity of subject, the length of the article, and the writer's level of professional experience. For original articles, we generally pay .05-.08 per word based on the previous qualifiers. For reprints, we generally pay .03-.05. If your submission is accepted, you should submit an invoice (within an email is fine) that includes name, address, phone number, name of story and payment amount. Payment shall be due within 30 days after the print date of the publication.

STORY REQUIREMENTS

Here is an Editorial Checklist for Black Hills Parent. Please review your article with the following in mind:

- Did I include a proposed headline? (Subheads, stand first, and pull quotes are good, too.)
- Did I put my name directly below that?
- Did I write in third person, rather than first person? (If your article can only be written in first person, please refer to **FIRST-PERSON SUBMISSIONS**.)
- Did I interview local sources (experts, parents, kids)?
- Did I write in an easy-to-read, conversational style? Does the article sound informative but not authoritative (and certainly not lecturing!), while leaving the "voice of authority" to the experts?
- Did I write an interesting, compelling lead that grabs the reader?
- Does my story include unpredictable details and fresh insights?
- Did I include a sidebar? (Most articles benefit from one or two sidebars, which might provide helpful tips, "how-to" steps, additional resources, or other information related to the subject.)
- Does each paragraph logically lead to the next paragraph? Are there transitions, subheads, etc., to guide the reader if these are necessary?
- Did I include the name and phone number of all the sources at the end of story (in case Black Hills Parent has any follow-up questions)?
- Are all sources, quotes or references accurate and used with permission of the source?

FIRST-PERSON SUBMISSIONS

Black Hills Parent is currently accepting the following submissions, told in first-person:

Personal Essays: These essays share personal experiences that would appeal to our readers. We are looking for inspiring, thought-provoking and humorous essays that honestly portray life.

Make us laugh. Make us cry. Show us the good, the bad or the downright ugly. What did you (the person in the article) learn and/or change? Did it turn out as expected? What did it all mean to them? The goal is to entertain, inform and to offer the wisdom gleaned from the experience.

Tips. Help make a parent's life easier by sharing creative ideas and solutions to everyday challenges, including (but not limited to): organization, scheduling, parenting, relationships, traveling, birthdays, holidays and more. These submissions should be between 300-700 words.

PHOTOS

Photographs grab readers' attention, and we include them whenever possible. If you have photos or leads for photos, please pass that information along as early in the writing process as possible.

EDITORIAL DISCRETION

All submissions are subject to editorial review and approval by Black Hills Parent and may be edited for grammar, clarity, brevity and tone. If major revisions are needed, you will be contacted. We reserve the right to reject an article at any stage before publication.

ARTICLES FROM BUSINESSES AND EXPERTS

We do not accept articles if the content is self-promoting for a business or professional. To advertise your business, please contact our ad sales department at 605-343-7684.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Appearing In Every Issue: Extensive Family Calendar, Spotlight Stories on a Local Family, Volunteers, Grandparents, Ages and Stages, Making an Impact, Youth-driven Success Stories, Family Wellness and Babies, Fun and Memories, Education, Home, You and Me

Fall (Publishes Aug – Covers through Oct) The Back to School and Fall Fun Issue: Everything you need to know to help gear up for a great year – from health checkups to school success strategies and special education programs.

Also featuring • Family finance • Fall fun • Fitness & kids

Winter (Publishes Nov – Covers through Jan) The Big Holiday Issue: Holiday planning, events and entertainment, Family Vehicle Review, toy and gift review.

Also featuring • Youth-driven success stories • Volunteering, charity • Winter family fun

Spring (Publishes Feb. – Covers through Apr) The Resolutions and New Beginnings Issue: Everything babies, Summer camp guide, Family health, fitness and nutrition, family and relationships, home services, kids and the arts.

Also featuring • Youth sports • Celebrate moms • Party planning

Summer (Publishes May – Covers through July) The Family Summer Fun Issue: Activities, gear, advice/tips, summer attractions, programs and venues.

Also featuring • Youth activities • Celebrate dads • Summer Fun