

Videos

Online videos can be a powerful way for your organization to share messages with the public. Use this resource to learn some video basics and understand the 3 main stages — pre-production, production, and post-production.

Pre-production

This is the first stage of making a video. It's when you plan every aspect of the video — from gathering resources to writing a script. Making a successful video takes a lot of work.

Determine your objectives

How does a video fit into your overall communication plan? Do you want to highlight content, spark action, or encourage awareness of an issue? Do you plan to make a live-action video, or would an animated video better suit your strategy and audience?

Make sure that video is really the right medium for your goals. Videos are great for:

- » Showing a process (like how to wash your hands)
- » Explaining a concept (like how radon gets into homes)
- » Sharing testimonials (like showcasing an interview with a community member who benefited from your organization's work)

But they're **not** a great way to convey a lot of detailed information. If that's what you have, you might want to reconsider and go with a website or fact sheet instead. And since they're expensive and hard to update, videos are often best suited to evergreen topics.

Know your target audience

Define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages that will resonate with them and prompt them to take action.

Write a script and create a storyboard

A solid script is crucial to developing an effective video on time and within your budget. Spend time thinking through key messages and images. When you're writing a script:

- » Keep it short — aim for 1 to 3 minutes at most.
- » Focus on a single main message and a clear target audience.
- » Avoid jargon, technical information, and detailed charts and graphs.
- » Use simple, easy-to-follow "stories."
- » Give people an action step — like visiting your website to follow up.
- » Read through your script out loud to make sure it sounds conversational.

Keep some technical constraints in mind, too:

- » Design for mobile — remember that many viewers will be watching on their phones.
- » Make sure the video makes sense without sound, since many people watch them muted.

Once you have a script, the next step is to develop storyboards. You pair the script with images — even very rough sketches — to help visualize how the video will look and feel. Storyboards will help you figure out details like:

- » Pacing and length
- » Shots, graphics, and animations
- » Locations and actors
- » Whether you need a narrator
- » Music and sound effects

.....
See how a concept evolved from script to storyboard in the [next section starting on page 53](#).

Set a budget

Make sure you understand the full costs of your video. Are they definitely within budget? If not, now is the time to make changes to your script (or find additional funding). Once you've started production, it's hard to scale back — and easy to go over budget.

Keep in mind the costs of:

- » Renting or buying film equipment, lighting equipment, and microphones
- » Hiring professional videographers and editors
- » Hiring an animator (for animated videos)
- » Hiring actors
- » Buying music and sound effects
- » Renting a location for filming

Gather your resources

Get everything you need to make your video a reality. Scout out and secure your filming location. Create your set. Will you need a green screen? Actors? A boom mic? Special lighting? Props? Do you need to rehearse? Do all of this during the pre-production phase.

Production

This is the second phase of making a video — filming it. Ideally, an experienced videographer does the camera work. There are many different types of videos, including:

» Interviews in a studio

This style of video is staged on a set with subjects who have prepared for the conversation.

» Interviews in the field

This style catches the subject(s) on location or (e.g., at a conference or walking on the street) to ask a few specific questions. This can include testimonials.

» Talking head

This is a basic “head and shoulders” direct shot with 1 person speaking directly to the camera/audience. This is ideal for short, personable, promotional videos.

» How to

This style offers tips and teaches the audience how to do something.

Best practices:

- » Capture high-quality sound. Avoid scratchy, muffled sounds and hisses and pops by using the right microphones.
 - » Use a tripod. Camera work should be steady and in focus.
 - » Get a variety of shots. Shooting a combination of tight close-ups, medium shots (from the head to the waist), and wide shots will give you choices when it comes to editing.
 - » Avoid extremely wide shots. Most people will watch videos on their computers, laptops, or mobile devices — very wide shots aren’t compatible with computer screens.
 - » Capture enough b-roll (extra footage you intercut with the main story to make the video engaging, like shots of locations or scenery).
 - » When filming “in the field,” use best practices, including proper lighting and high-quality audio.
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Post-production

This is the final stage, which includes editing, promotion, and evaluation.

Edit your video

Ideally, an experienced videographer will edit the film. This process includes:

- » Arranging footage in the correct order
- » Removing footage you don't want or need
- » Adding music, titles, transitions, and possibly other effects
- » Converting (encoding) into the correct format(s)

Promote your video

Establishing a promotional plan helps ensure that your video reaches the intended audience. Without a plan, your video may not get many views.

Consider:

- » Embedding the video on high-profile, topic-specific pages, campaign materials, or blogs
- » Sending promotional emails to partners
- » Cross-promoting the videos on other social media channels related to your organization

Evaluate the results

How did your video do? How many people viewed it? How many people took action because of it? Evaluation is an integral component of measuring the success of all social media activities, including video.

Basic YouTube metrics include monitoring the number of times each video has been viewed and reviewing viewer comments and questions that have been posted to the video. YouTube Insights is an analytics and reporting product that provides additional metrics about uploaded videos.

Sample: Script and Storyboard

Script

Subject: ATSDR's Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Call to Action

Video length: 1:45

Visual approach: Animated video using 2D silhouetted figures

Time	Visuals	Narration (voiceover)
0:00	<p>Lead-in screen displays the words "Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education," the subtitle "How state licensing and health agencies can help," and the ATSDR logo.</p> <p>[Cheerful, upbeat music plays.]</p>	
0:03	<p>Animated text says "8.3 Million." A silhouetted child appears and jumps onto the "8.3 Million" number as she's chasing a butterfly.</p>	<p>There are up to 8.3 million children in daycares, preschools, and other early care and education centers in the U.S.</p>
0:10	<p>The child jumps to catch the butterfly as blue silhouettes of daycare buildings appear, surrounded by flowers.</p>	<p>And people assume that these early care and education centers are safe places for children to learn and grow.</p>

Time	Visuals	Narration (voiceover)
0:15	<p>The blue daycare center silhouettes turn orange and the flowers wilt. The girl runs off screen to the right.</p> <p>[Music fades out.]</p>	<p>But what if we told you... that's not always true?</p>
0:20	<p>8 children illustrate the "1 in 8" statistic — 1 orange child and 7 blue children. The words "Harmful Chemicals" appear.</p>	<p>Because right now, up to 1 in 8 children could be in a child care building that hasn't been properly assessed for harmful chemicals.</p>
0:25	<p>An orange map of the United States appears, and question marks appear on the map. The words "No Clear Process" appear.</p>	<p>In most states, there's no clear process to make sure early care and education centers are located safely.</p>
0:31	<p>Drops of orange chemicals fall from above and form into the shapes of a factory, gas station, and dry cleaning facility.</p>	<p>So they've been in or near some pretty dangerous places — like factories, old gas station sites, and dry cleaners.</p>
0:37	<p>The words "Mercury," "Lead" and "Radon" appear in blocks.</p>	<p>Children may be at risk of contact with some very harmful materials — like mercury, lead, and radon.</p>
0:45	<p>The child (blue) watches as other children (orange) play on the ground.</p>	<p>Children are more sensitive to these materials than adults because their bodies are still growing...</p>

Time	Visuals	Narration (voiceover)
0:49	The child grows up into an adult.	...and they can have serious and irreversible health effects. . .
0:52	The words "Kidney Damage," "Learning Difficulties" and "Cancer" appear.	...including kidney damage, learning difficulties, and cancer.
0:57	A shift in tone — a new map of the United States appears, but now it's blue. States turn green, one by one. The butterfly reappears and flutters across the screen. [Cheerful music returns.]	We know you already work hard to protect children's health in your state...
1:01	The camera follows the butterfly right, as it flies away. The words "Early Care and Education Centers Are Located Safely" appear.	...and you can build on those efforts to make sure that early care and education centers are located safely.
1:07	Childcare buildings pop up one by one with a green "safe" checkmark on each one.	We have resources that can help your state develop an action plan...
1:11	Camera pans right and towers illustrating specific sectors (state health agencies, policymakers, licensing agencies) pop up. Bridges appear that connect the different towers.	...and build important partnerships between different sectors, like state health agencies, policymakers, and licensing agencies. . .

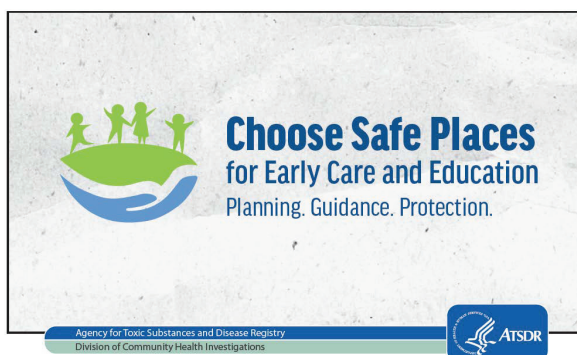
Time	Visuals	Narration (voiceover)
1:18	Camera pans right to show the child with other children playing in a safe, clean outdoor area.	...so together, you can make environmental safety a key consideration when a new center is being approved.
1:24	Camera pans right to show the girl chasing the butterfly.	Partnering together can prevent potential tragedies — and has other big benefits...
1:29	An arrow rises up from below labeled “Trust,” (indicating increased trust) while an arrow drops down from above labeled “Costs” (indicating lowered costs).	..., like building trust in communities, and lowering legal and liability costs.
1:34	Camera pans right and the girl runs past a computer screen, showing checkmarks (indicating an action plan.)	Learn how to protect children in early care and education centers and create an action plan for your state.
1:40	Girl and butterfly come to a halt. The words “Because Our Kids Are Worth It” appear.	Because our kids are worth it
1:43	Visit ATSDR's Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education website .	

Storyboards

Subject: ATSDR's Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Call to

Action Video length: 1:45

Visual approach: Animated video using 2D silhouetted figures



There are up to 8.3 million...

("8.3 Million" appears on-screen.)



...children in...

(A child jumps onto "8.3 Million" from the left and chases a butterfly across the words.)



...daycares, preschools...

(Daycares, preschools, and other buildings pop up below the words as they are said.)



...and other early care and education centers in the U.S.

(Daycares, preschools, and other buildings pop up below the words as they are said. The girl continues to run across the 8.3 million text.)



And people assume...

(Girl jumps off the 8.3 million text and lands between the buildings, which are in the background. She shrinks to fit the size of the buildings. The text and the buildings rise up from the bottom of the screen.)



...that these early care and education centers...

(Flowers pop up one by one between the buildings. The butterfly comes back on screen from the right and flies around, still in the foreground.)



...are safe places for children to learn and grow.

(Flowers pop up one by one between the buildings. Butterfly continues to fly and the girl reacts to flowers growing in.)



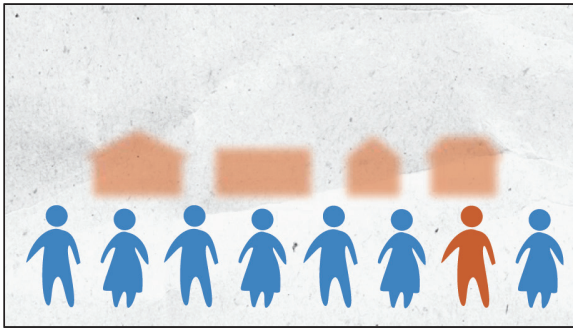
But what if we told you that's not always true?

(Buildings turn orange as flowers droop and disappear. Girl becomes scared and runs off screen to the right. The butterfly also gets "scared" and flies off screen to the left.)



Because right now...

(Camera pans away from the buildings and they become blurry and lighter in color.)



...up to 1 in 8 children...

(8 children appear beneath the orange buildings and illustrate the "1 in 8" statistic — 1 orange child and 7 blue children)



... could be in a child care building that hasn't been properly assessed for harmful chemicals.

(The words "harmful chemicals" appear when the words are said)



To see the finalized and published video, visit [ATSDR's Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education website](#).



Checklist

Branding

- Includes your organization's logo in title or ending slide
- Includes your organization's tagline in title or ending slide
- Uses your organization's fonts and color palette

Script/Storyboard

- Video is simple, short, and engaging — 1 to 3 minutes at most
- Avoids jargon, technical information, and detailed charts and graphs
- Uses a simple, easy-to-follow “story” with a single message or call to action
- Sounds conversational (read the script out loud to check)
- Main message is in the first 30 seconds of the video

Production

- Captures high-quality sound
- Camera work is steady and in focus
- Shots have proper lighting
- Includes a variety of shots to keep the video engaging
- Avoids extremely wide shots
- There's enough b-roll to help support the video
- Footage from interviews “in the field” cites facts, not opinions

Post-production

- Video is properly edited
- Music is arranged
- Video has been submitted for approval at rough draft and final edit stages
- Video is shared on approved channels
- There are plans in place to promote and evaluate the video

To access the Health Communication Playbook online, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting/docs/health-comm-playbook-508.pdf>