

## TV & Media Literacy Skills for Parents to Teach Children

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## Agenda

1. Facts about children and the media families need to know
2. Media literacy skills & examples
3. Practice with video clips

*These slides are available at*  
<http://parentingresearch.org>

Electronic Media are  
**POWERFUL**  
&  
**PERVASIVE**

### **The average American child:**

- Ages 8-18 spends 7 ½ hours per day using media
- About 3 ½ hours of this time is spent media multi-tasking
- Ages 6 years and under: 2 hours using screen media per day
- For 63% of 8-18yrs – TV is on while eating dinner

### The Tutor in the Bedroom

- Children with a TV in their bedroom:
  - 19% of infants
  - 29% of 2-3 year-olds
  - 43% of ages 4-6
  - 68% of ages 8-18

### The Tutor in the Bedroom

#### With a TV in a child's bedroom:

- Viewing time increases
- Risk of being overweight increases
- Risk of smoking (later) doubles
  - ◇ Why?

With a TV in a child's bedroom

(continued):

- Fewer alternative activities
- Child performs more poorly in school
- Parents have little opportunity to limit, monitor or discuss what is watched.

**Video & Computer Games**

- More than ½ of all games RATED as containing violence - 90% of games for 10 years and over.
- Many games combine violence with sex
- 49% of 8-18s have videogame players in their bedrooms

**Major concerns**

Screen time:

- Children influenced by content
- Are powerful teaching media, largely uncontrolled by parents
- Major effects on physical & psychological health (obesity, depression)
- Major effects on behaviors, attitudes, academic success (and other effects?)
- Steals time from other important activities

**Major effects of VIOLENT content**

Children's shows - the highest proportion of violence

- Increased anti-social and aggressive behaviors
- Increased bullying, even among teens
- Beliefs that violence is appropriate response

**Major effects of VIOLENT content (continued)**

- Increased fear of being harmed - "mean world syndrome" and other "reality-defining effects"
- Increased desensitization to virtual and real world violence
- Depression
- Sleep disturbances

Link between media violence and aggressive behavior greater than that of:

- Calcium intake & bone mass
- Lead ingestion & lower IQ
- and
- Nearly as strong as between cigarette smoking and lung cancer

Warning from:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Psychological Association
- American Medical Association
- American Psychiatric Association

**“Interpersonal violence, for victims and perpetrators, is now a more prevalent health risk than infections disease, cancer, or congenital disorders for children, adolescents, and young adults.”**

- American Academy of Pediatrics

### Overweight/Obesity & Media

- Approximately 1 in 3 children over six years is overweight and 15% of this age group are obese.
- Preschool children watching >2 hours TV per day are more likely to be overweight

### Overweight/Obesity & Media (continued)

- Children watching >3 hours per day 50% more likely to be obese than those watching less than 2 hours per day
- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> graders who cut the hours of screen time per week lowered obesity indicators

### Electronic media teaches, influences, & conditions

#### Attitudes & values:

- Tolerance & stereotypes
- Consumer appetites
- What a hero is like (& a villain)
- What stories to act out, replacing creative fantasy

### Electronic media teaches, influences, & conditions (continued)

- Mistaken perceptions of reality
- How adults typically behave
- The values of the media designers
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Disrespect, cynicism  
“Whoever tells the stories defines the culture.”  
- David Walsh, Ph.D.

### What can we do?

- Help parents understand the issue
- Promote alternatives
  - ✦ more prosocial programs
  - ✦ more healthful activities
- Advocate for better program information and public service ads, etc.
- Teach children media literacy skills

**GOAL: To help children think critically as they view**

### Media Literacy Skills for Children

1. Screen media is always teaching
  - a) You need to think about what it is teaching and what you want to learn from it.
2. Is it real or not real?
3. Within parental limits, think about your choices ahead of time.

### 4. Four types of media clips

- Friendly clips
- Hurting clips
- Selling clips
- Showing clips

### 5. Media Diet

- Nutritious media (limited in amount of time)
  - ✦ Friendly
  - ✦ Showing
- Junk media
  - ✦ Selling
  - ✦ Hurting

### 6. Why so much violence & sex?

- Purpose to deliver eyeballs to advertisers
- Reach out – grab your attention
- Stimulates the limbic system
- Humor also
- Combinations of 2 or all 3
- Deliver more limbic jolts per hour (JPH)
- Ramp up the JPH as we get desensitized

### Hidden Messages

8. Violence –
  - a) glamorized
  - b) sanitized
  - c) unrealistic
  - d) “heroes” almost always use
9. Alternatives to violence
10. False “reality” or “knowledge”

- a) Stereotypes
  - i. Gender roles
  - ii. Sexuality
  - iii. Ethnicity
  - iv. Weight
  - v. Appearance
  - vi. Age, etc.

**Become *hidden lesson* detectives!**

7. Parents and children *talking back*

### Healthier Activities

Spend plenty of time involved in healthier activities, such as

- Reading, with parent or by self
- Physical play with real objects, including games, indoors and out
- Socializing with family members, friends
- Personal reflection
- Music or art
- Doing dishes, learning to cook, repairing things, ETC.

Please fill out your evaluations –  
THANK YOU

Find this PowerPoint presentation at  
<http://parentingresearch.org>