

TV and Children

As parents, we cannot ignore the power of TV.

We must:

- Understand that TV is a strong influence.
- Protect our children from TV's negative effects.
- Use TV in positive ways for our children.

Young children learn skills by *doing*, not just by watching.

Children who watch too much TV typically have:

- Lower language and reading skills
- Young TV watchers do not get enough exercise, and therefore, do not develop good motor and coordination skills.
- TV's fast pace can lower your child's attention span.

TV violence can:

- Make children more aggressive and afraid.
- Show children that violence is a good way to solve problems.

TV makes life seem too simple. *Real* problems usually take longer than 30 minutes to solve.

TV commercials teach children to want more, more, more – and to want it now!

TV means less time for:

- Family fun
- Creativity and imagination
- Interacting with the environment

The Good News:

TV can be a positive tool, if we use it well. Many programs help children learn, and assist in teaching good values.

To use TV well:

- Screen what your child watches. Change the channel if you see violent, offensive, or adult programs and explain why you have changed the channel.

- Slow-paced programs like *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* can be interesting to children and teach them how to cooperate, be kind, and sensitive.
- Look for nature programs.
- Set time limits. No more than one hour a day!
- Turn off the TV when nobody is watching. Do not let it run in the background.

Watch TV with your child.

- Talk about what you are seeing.
- Ask questions about the program.
- Help your child think about what is happening.
- Remember, a young child cannot tell the difference between pretend and real life. You will need to explain the difference.
- Contact the TV stations in your area and ask for better children's programs!

Remember: Only YOU can make TV positive for your child!