



Not All TV is for Kids

We might think it is educational for children to watch the news to find out more about the world. Unfortunately, too much TV news focuses on events that are shocking or dramatic. It often shows clips of disasters, attacks, and other kinds of human suffering. TV news stories are written for grown-ups. They do not provide the kind of details and important perspective that children need in order to understand the world around them.

Because younger children have limited experience in the world, they lack the “lens” that adults have to understand and digest events. Fragmented pictures and sound bites that come across on news programs can be very disturbing.

Help your children learn about the world from the places you take them, the stories you tell them, the books you read to them and television shows that are designed especially for their age group and level of understanding.



A Word About Violence—

At first, most children find violent images upsetting. But as they get used to them—when seen over and over again—the images become routine, less frightening, and often accepted as real possibilities.

Even the fighting on cartoon shows and video games can encourage your children to see violence as an acceptable way to respond to problems and conflicts. Be sure to choose TV—like the shows on PBS—to introduce children to other ways to resolve problems peacefully. Share the TV experience with your children and be around to talk with them about what they've seen on TV.



And Keep in Mind—

If the “bad guys” are funny looking, disfigured, speak differently or are members of a minority group, it may send a message that badness is linked to the way you look or that people who look different are bad.

If children see that women or older people are always shown as helpless and always in need of men to take care of them, then children may accept that women aren't strong, capable or smart.

When young children see “heroes” use violence to solve problems they may think that force is an acceptable way for “good guys” to get things done.