

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

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June 15, 1994

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William Caton, Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am submitting the information requested of testifiers at the *en banc* hearing on the Children's Television Act (CTA), scheduled for Tuesday, June 28, 1994:

- ▶ Outline of my testimony
- ▶ Speaker biography and full resume
- ▶ Description of the Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

Also enclosed in this packet are:

- ▶ **REPORT CARD '93**, the first annual report on the status of CTA compliance by the thirteen commercial stations monitored by the campaign
- ▶ *When Pulling the Plug Isn't Enough ... A Parent's Guide to TV*, a "user-friendly" handbook developed by the campaign to help parents develop critical viewing skills in their children.

As requested, I have enclosed the original and nine copies for the commission's use. An additional 21 copies have been forwarded to Larry A. Miller for his distribution. I look forward to sharing the experiences of our grassroots campaign with you and the other commissioners on June 28.

Sincerely,


Charlene Hughins Uhl
Campaign Director

No. of Copies rec'd
List A B C D E

Enclosures

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

En Banc Hearing - Tuesday, June 28, 1994

Panel 2: Educational & Information Programming: How Much Is Enough?

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Overview of the Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

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- ▶ Campaign has two goals:
 - 1) Assure compliance with Children's Television Act in Maryland viewing areas
 - 2) Educate parents, teachers and others on how to develop critical viewing skills in children
- ▶ Community-based "teams" have been monitoring commercial broadcasters
- ▶ Campaign produced annual **REPORT CARD** on status of CTA compliance
- ▶ Vagueness of Children's Television Act and regulations required campaign to develop own standards for grading station compliance

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) **Require one hour/day of educational and informational programming and ensure programming for different ages be included throughout week**
 - ▶ Campaign found average of 1-1/2 hours per week of CTA programming - little more than 1% of total weekly air time from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
 - ▶ Majority of children's programming aired on weekends; children, like adults, watch television all week, not just weekends
 - ▶ Most stations have programming for preschoolers, some for teen-agers; there is, however, a marked absence of shows for children 6 through 12 years old
 - ▶ Parents want access to educational and informational programming throughout week for children so they can limit total hours each day but allow some viewing all week long
- 2) **Air educational and information programming at times children are likely to watch and maintain regular time slots for these programs**
 - ▶ Many children's programs scheduled at times when most children are not watching, such as 5:30 or 6 a.m.
 - ▶ Many stations schedule children's programming in time slots that are frequently pre-empted by specials, particularly sports events
 - ▶ Stations move children's programming around, with little or no advance notice, making it difficult for parents to establish "okay" times for their children to watch television
- 3) **Institute standard-length programming as criterion for compliance**
 - ▶ It is demeaning to claim children can't focus for more than a 60-second spot in educational programming; successful educational and informational programming belies this contention
 - ▶ Children will watch good programming that is not patronizing, has content of interest to them, and speaks to their level of knowledge and understanding
 - ▶ Parents need established time periods and length to help them guide their children's viewing habits; a Public Service Announcement format randomly aired throughout the day or the 5 minutes of the nightly news program devoted to the weather forecast make it difficult if not impossible for parents to supervise their children's television viewing

CHARLENE HUGHINS UHL
Campaign Director
Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

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Charlene Hughins Uhl is an educator by training and has taught preschool, elementary and junior high school, as well as special education classes. She has almost twenty years' experience in public policy, including positions as a staff analyst for the Maryland State Legislature and a gubernatorial aide on disability issues. She has also worked in the field of developmental disabilities and mental health, helping to develop community programs for children and adults.

Charlene is currently Director of Ready At Five, a Maryland partnership to ensure that all children birth through five are ready to learn when they enter school. Ready At Five and Advocates for Children and Youth, the Maryland child advocacy organization, are conducting the Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV and Charlene directs this statewide campaign.

CHARLENE HUGHINS UHL

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Legislative & Systems Experience and Advocacy

- Direct Statewide partnership of business leaders, pediatricians, seniors, public policy makers, advocates and funders in resource development, priority setting, and systems change for investment in children birth through 5 years old
- Directed statewide advocacy organization committed to assuring rights of and services to individuals with developmental disabilities
- Initiated statewide system of legislative information and advocacy for diverse disability groups and individuals
- Served as staff to key Maryland legislative committee and various standing and ad hoc subcommittees dealing with disability, education, and taxation issues
- Established a coalition of state advocacy and provider organizations to advance the issues and needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities
- Participated in a wide variety of disability coalitions, associations, and committees dedicated to positive systems change
- Directed statewide initiative to promote and establish prevention and early intervention services for disadvantaged children

Administration, Supervision, and Management

- Administered program budgets in excess of \$1.9 million
- Recruited and supervised highly-skilled professional and support staff
- Administered all aspects of a nine-county community mental health program
- Managed a four-county program of day and residential services for adults with developmental disabilities

Program Planning and Development

- Directed the development of two major regional programs for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents
- Instituted a tri-county residential services program for adults with chronic mental illness
- Developed a community rehabilitation program in an underserved rural county
- Designed and implemented a statewide compliance plan for barrier-free construction and renovation
- Developed a child care model to integrate infants and children with disabilities into existing child care programs

Communication Skills

- Delivered regular presentations to national, state, and community organizations on diverse topics
- Functioned as a successful lobbyist before Maryland State Legislature and local governments
- Dealt extensively with all types of media
- Prepared speeches, reports, and correspondence for elected officials, program administrators, and private organizations
- Revised state laws and regulations in areas of health, education, human services, and taxes
- Conducted workshops and training sessions on legislative and regulatory processes, self-advocacy and lobbying for consumers, parents, professionals, and others

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

1991 to Present	<i>Director - Ready At Five Partnership, Baltimore, Maryland</i>
1986 to 1991	<i>Executive Director - United Cerebral Palsy of Maryland, Inc., Annapolis, Maryland</i>
1983 to 1986	<i>Director for Community Programs - Mental Hygiene Administration/Eastern Region, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Cambridge, Maryland</i>
1981 to 1983	<i>Director of Special Projects - Maryland State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, Baltimore, Maryland</i>
1977 to 1981	<i>Assistant Director - Governor's Office of Handicapped Individuals, Annapolis, Maryland</i>
1975 to 1977	<i>Staff Analyst - House Committee on Ways and Means, Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, Maryland</i>

EDUCATION

M.A., Education Administration, 1980; University of Maryland.

California Teaching Certificate, Elementary and Special Education, 1971; San Jose, California.

B.A., Biology and Social Work, cum laude, 1970; Principia College, Elsau, Illinois.

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

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Purpose of Campaign

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The Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV is a Statewide effort to:

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- Assure compliance with the Children's Television Act throughout Maryland
- Promote quality children's programming on television stations broadcasting within our State
- Reduce kids' exposure to television violence by educating parents and others about its effects on children and advocating for a viewer notification system about programming content
- Achieve the active participation of parents and community groups in the Campaign through a State steering committee and local grassroots activities

Campaign Activities

- A State steering committee, with representatives from co-sponsors of the Maryland Campaign and the Center for Media Education's National Campaign for Kids' TV, has been convened to direct and support Campaign activities around Maryland
- The Campaign is conducting presentations around the State, to develop community-based participation and capacity in influencing television broadcasters serving these communities. Using the networks of the State steering committee and local community "teams," the Campaign is providing education on the Children's Television Act, the role of television in children's growth and development, and the role of parents in monitoring children's television viewing
- The Campaign is working with the local "teams" in monitoring the programming of commercial TV stations broadcasting in Maryland, meeting with local TV stations, and encouraging better choices for children on commercial television
- The Campaign has produced two documents:
 - ✓ *When Pulling the Plug Isn't Enough ... A Parent's Guide to TV*, for use by parents in guiding the television watched by their children
 - ✓ **REPORT CARD '93**, a status report on the compliance and performance of commercial TV stations broadcasting in Maryland in serving the needs of our children
- The Campaign is working with Parent Action of Maryland to bring together parents, teachers and others concerned about children to provide education about TV violence and how they can reduce the amount of violence kids see on television

KIDS' TV: IS MARYLAND MAKING THE GRADE?

REPORT CARD '93

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TOTAL HOURS	JUN 15 1994 FCC MAIL ROOM	D
TIMES SHOWN		C-
FOR DIFFERENT AGES		D+
QUALITY		D+
LOCAL PROGRAMS		C-
STATION INTEREST		B-
OVERALL GRADE		D+



Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV
A Project of
Advocates for Children & Youth
and
Ready At Five

What Is The Maryland Campaign For Kids' TV?

The Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV was launched to make sure TV stations serving Maryland comply with the federal Children's Television Act. This landmark legislation requires all commercial TV stations to broadcast "programming specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children."

The Campaign addresses groups and organizations on the effects of TV on children and provides practical techniques to encourage critical viewing skills in children. *"When Pulling the Plug Isn't Enough . . . A Parent's Guide to TV,"* is a recent Campaign publication specifically designed for families with children. The Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV is a joint project of Advocates for Children & Youth and Ready At Five, in cooperation with the Center for Media Education.

Who Graded The Stations?

The Campaign convened parents, teachers, and community leaders to work together in teams. Each team adopted a commercial television station, reviewed its Public Inspection File and evaluated those programs identified by the station as complying with the Children's Television Act. The teams graded stations in six categories:

Total Hours evaluates the total amount of programming for children designated by the station as meeting the requirements of the Children's Television Act.

Times Shown considers whether the shows are scheduled at times when children would or could view them.

For Different Ages determines whether the station broadcasts programs for all age groups of children, preschool through the teen years.

Quality assesses how well the programs meet the educational and informational needs of children.

Local Programs indicates whether the station produces local educational and informational programs for kids, particularly programs aired on a regular basis.

Station Interest indicates how clearly the station describes its children's programming and how willing it is to discuss the Children's Television Act with the community team.

What Do The Grades Mean?

A = Excellent

B = Good

C = Needs Improvement

D = Seriously Deficient

U = Unsatisfactory

Report Card '93 presents overall grades for all commercial television stations serving Maryland. It shows how the community believes TV broadcasters are serving the "educational and informational needs of children." It is not a Federal Communications Commission filing but rather a community perspective from which Maryland broadcasters and community groups can work to improve the choices on commercial television for children.

Why Is Television So Important To Kids?

Television has a profound and lasting impact on our children. They are exposed to TV from infancy to adulthood. Children spend an enormous amount of time watching TV, absorbing its messages and values, and processing -- from a child's perspective -- what it's saying about our world.

- The average American child watches television between 2 and 3 hours each day; preschoolers watch 3 1/2 hours a day.
- Most children spend more time watching TV than they spend on any other waking activity, including going to school.
- The average child probably sees more than 20,000 TV commercials in a year.
- Children under 7 pay as much attention to commercials as they do to regular programming.
- Heavy television viewers (4 hours a day or more) generally expend less effort on school work, have poorer reading skills, play less well with friends, and have fewer hobbies and activities than light viewers.
- Preschoolers are unable to distinguish fact from fantasy on TV. In the minds of young children, television is a source of entirely factual information.
- Currently, children's television shows average 32 violent acts per hour; prime time television shows 6 acts per hour.

KEY FINDINGS... KEY FINDINGS...

Total Hours

The teams agreed that far too little time is given to children's programming. Several stations offer only three half-hour programs during a week - 3% of the weekly air time between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

"Kids don't watch this channel so we don't have any children's shows." - Station Manager

Stations tend to cluster children's programming on Saturday. Very few programs targeted at children air on weekdays in late afternoon, early evening or during prime time viewing hours.

"[The station] thinks that everybody in the community who is in favor of kids' TV reform wants to 'saturate' the airwaves with children's programming from 2 - 10 p.m." -Team Member

Times Shown

Many children's programs are scheduled at times when most children are not watching, such as 5:30 or 6 a.m. Given the sparse amount of programming most stations offer, this is a "double whammy" for kids.

"Early Saturday mornings are a good time to reach the intended audience; but it is not the only time. The other 'best' time is during weekday afternoons, 2:30 - 6 p.m." -Team Member

KEY FINDINGS... KEY FINDINGS...

Stations frequently pre-empt regular children's shows with adult programs. While a station would list a program in its Public Inspection File as fulfilling a requirement of the Children's Television Act, the program might only appear half the time in its regular time slot.

"Kids' shows should be spread throughout the week, including prime time, before and after school, Saturday and Sunday -- not just Saturday a.m." -Team Member

Stations move children's programming into different time slots with no advance notice, making it difficult for parents to videotape programs for later viewing by the family.

"Parents need to know when educational and informational TV programs are on well in advance to encourage their kids to watch them." -Team Member

For Different Ages

Most stations have programming for preschoolers, some have programming for teen-agers -- but there is a marked absence of shows for children 6 through 12 years old. Most teams found the Public Inspection File to have no mention of the target-age for a show.

"The public inspection file didn't tell us which programs the station aired in compliance with the Children's Television Act. We were given a handwritten note by the Public Affairs person listing some shows she thought were in compliance." -Team Member

KEY FINDINGS... KEY FINDINGS...

Quality

The quality of programs designated by the stations as meeting the requirements of the Children's Television Act vary dramatically. Some stations selectively choose which children's shows to include as "serving the educational and informational needs of children" -- while others dump everything for kids into this category.

"[These programs are considered low in quality because they] are passive, do not require much thinking or analysis, and do not stimulate a lot of afterthought, questioning or follow-up activities after watching." -Team Member

Most stations offer children's shows that are purely entertainment, particularly cartoons targeting preschoolers. Some stations tried to put an "educational spin" on cartoons. One station even offered its nightly weather report as part of its Children's Television Act compliance efforts!

"Parents need to encourage kids to watch quality programs." -Team Member

Local Programs

While locally-produced programs are rare, there are a few bright spots, such as "It's Academic." There are also a number of good specials produced by local stations, a first class example being "The Great Chesapeake Bay Challenge."

KEY FINDINGS... KEY FINDINGS...

Station Interest

With few exceptions, the stations were cordial and interested in meeting with and talking to community teams. Many teams appreciated the station representatives' openness and candor. Several stations described plans for future children's programs and more hours for kids' TV. At the same time, teams were disappointed with the excuses and rationalizations some stations gave to explain the limited amount of quality children's programming currently offered.

"The station defines itself as a profit making supplier of syndicated entertainment." -Team Member

"I'm in the entertainment business. MPT does the job [for children's programming]." -Station Manager

Many teams had problems understanding the Public Inspection Files. Because no standard format exists, teams often found it difficult to decipher which programs a station included in its Children's Television Act programming. Several network affiliates listed pages of national children programming available -- but as one team found, much of the national programming was not aired by the local affiliate.

"I'd go bankrupt if I tried to broadcast more children's programming. If everyone [all the commercial stations] did it together, I'd do it." -Station Manager

"If the government wants us to do this, they should buy the time." -Station Manager

Station Rankings

Community teams monitored thirteen commercial television stations serving Maryland*. The following list ranks these thirteen stations from highest to lowest score based on their grades in each of the six categories.

STATION	RANK
9/WUSA (CBS)	1
7/WJLA (ABC)	2
20/WDCA	2
2/WMAR (NBC)	3
5/WTTG (FOX)	3
45/WBFF (FOX)	3
47/WMDT (ABC/NBC)	4
4/WRC (NBC)	5
25/WHAG (NBC)	6
13/WJZ (ABC)	7
54/WNUV	8
11/WBAL (CBS)	9
50/WFTY	10

** One station, Channel 16/WBOC in Salisbury, was not included in Report Card '93 as it was not monitored by a community team during the first year of the Maryland Campaign.*

Report Card '93 presents the community's perspective on how well stations overall are "serving the educational and informational needs of children." Future report cards will detail specific activities and efforts of individual stations. Working with individual stations, community teams will use this report as a baseline to increase the amount of quality programming for children on television.

What Do We Want for Kids?

We have three years -- until 1996 -- before Maryland and D.C. commercial broadcasters will apply for license renewal and demonstrate to the Federal Communications Commission how they comply with the Children's Television Act.

WE WANT MORE QUALITY SHOWS FOR KIDS . . .

"Our station only had one program but it was an excellent one. We wish they had much more." -Team Member

"The specials may be great but they are not regular nor enough." -Team Member

SHOWN WHEN THEY ARE WATCHING,

"Many of the stronger positive messages, i.e., environmental, nutrition, etc. are presented too early for the majority of children to watch." -Team Member

GOOD LOCAL PROGRAMS . . .

"It's Academic was viewed as most educational, providing excellent role models for teens (males, females, and all races) and promoted respect and friendship with adults (teachers, coaches)." -Team Member

AND A PARTNERSHIP WITH BROADCASTERS.

*"The station did not seem willing to assume responsibility for their inadequate response to the Children's Television Act, blaming it on the network, poor ratings, past experiences, and inadequate sponsors and resources."
-Team Member*

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

a project of

Advocates for Children & Youth and Ready at Five

in cooperation with the

Center for Media Education

Funding for the Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV provided by:

THE ABELL FOUNDATION

and

**THE AARON STRAUS AND LILLIE STRAUS
FOUNDATION**

WE OFFER VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY TEAMS

Chesapeake Academy
Child Youth Services Administration/
D.C. Commission on Mental Health
Crossway Community
Family Advocacy and Support Association
Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Maryland Commission for Women
Mental Health Association of the Lower Eastern Shore
Mental Health Association of Montgomery County
Mental Health Association of Prince George's County
Parents Supporting Parents of Maryland
Prince George's County Department of Family Services
The Baltimore Group
The Catonsville Group
Washington County Office for Children

***FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE MARYLAND
CAMPAIGN FOR KIDS' TV, CALL ACY AT (410) 547-9200.***

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When Pulling the Plug Isn't Enough . . .



A Parent's Guide to TV

Developed by the

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

A Project of

Advocates for Children & Youth and Ready At Five

In Association with the

Center for Media Education

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is a project of
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Center For Media Education.

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH, INC. (ACY) is a statewide nonprofit organization providing a strong and effective voice for Maryland's children who cannot vote or speak for themselves. ACY's goal is to educate Marylanders about the needs of children and encourage investment in children before they get sick, are abused, drop out of school, or get into trouble.

READY AT FIVE is a statewide partnership to ensure that all Maryland's children, birth through age 5, get the health care, nutrition, and early childhood programs they need to be successful in school.

THE CENTER FOR MEDIA EDUCATION is a national public interest membership organization dedicated to improving the quality of children's television and empowering parents and educators to deal more effectively with the media. Based in Washington, D.C., the Center's Campaign for Kids' TV is carrying on the work of Action for Children's Television, which closed in 1992.

Funding for this project was provided to the **Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV** by ***THE ABELL FOUNDATION*** and ***THE AARON STRAUS AND LILLIE STRAUS FOUNDATION***. This guide was researched and authored by Kimberly Riddle.

Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use this work is granted as long as ownership is properly attributed to the MARYLAND CAMPAIGN FOR KIDS' TV, a project of ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, INC. and READY AT FIVE in association with the CENTER FOR MEDIA EDUCATION.

Single copies of this guide are available free of charge. We only ask that you send \$1.50 for postage and handling. Please mail your check made payable to: Advocates for Children & Youth, Inc., 300 Cathedral Street, Suite 500, Baltimore, MD 21201.

When Pulling the Plug Isn't Enough . . .



A Parent's Guide to TV

Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV

A Project of
Advocates for Children & Youth and Ready At Five
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2nd Edition, December 1993

SOME FACTS ABOUT KIDS AND TV

- The average American preschooler watches 3 1/2 hours of television a day. By the age of 8, most children are watching 4 hours a day.
- The average kindergarten student has watched 5,000 hours of TV. That's more time than he or she will spend in an elementary school classroom.
- Most children spend more time watching TV than they spend on any other waking activity, including going to school.
- The average child probably sees more than 20,000 TV commercials in one year.
- More than 9 out of 10 food ads on Saturday-morning television are for sugary cereals and candy bars, salty canned foods, fatty fast foods and chips, and other nutritionally flawed foods.
- While the level of violence in prime-time television is about 5 violent acts per hour, the level of violence in children's Saturday-morning programming is about 32 violent acts per hour.
- By the time a child reaches 6th grade, he or she will have witnessed at least 8,000 murders and over 100,000 other acts of violence on TV.
- Children who watch a large number of aggressive programs also tend to hold attitudes and values that favor the use of aggression to resolve conflicts.

WHY A GUIDE FOR PARENTS?

Parents are undoubtedly the most overworked group of people on the planet. We all have jobs to do, in and away from home, plus the complicated (and demanding) task of child rearing. We all want to do our best as parents and to do what's best for our kids.

The reality for most of us is that "what's best" is hard to measure and often harder to achieve. And the experts -- who don't have the all the answers either -- are always bombarding us with what we ought to be doing.

"I worry that I won't be able to control what my children watch long enough to teach critical viewing skills and my values. If I can't, I'm prepared to throw out the TV."

- Howard County Parent

Television and its effect on our children is a favorite topic. We all know that too much isn't good and that much of what children see needs a "parental filter" to make sense. But, short of banning "the tube" altogether, many of us are at a loss for an easy, effective way to guide our family through TV land.

MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR TELEVISION

Television is here to stay. It's a permanent part of our culture. Limiting the time your kids watch television is okay, but they still have to cope in a world where television is everywhere. And they must deal with other children who may be exposed to giant amounts of unsupervised TV watching.

"I want television for children to help reinforce the values that I'm trying to teach at home."

- Montgomery County Parent

It's good to set limits, but it will help your kids more if you teach them how to deal with what they're hearing and seeing. In the course of everyday conversation and activities, you can show them how to evaluate a sales-pitch and how to become a critical viewer. You also can teach them to find "the good stuff" on television and to demand more of it from broadcasters.

Children's Television at its Best Can. . .

- expand your children's world by teaching them about people they may never meet and places they may never visit.
- reinforce your family values and promote good citizenship.
- increase your children's vocabulary, language skills and interest in reading.
- provide a "jump-start" for family conversations around important issues.

Television at its Worst Can. . .

- produce an unrealistic view of the world by setting its own standard of "perfection" and morals.
- discourage your children's creativity and imagination.
- encourage inappropriately simple or violent solutions to complex problems.
- replace the development of lifelong hobbies and/or interests.

PROMOTING THE BEST IN TELEVISION

Television is a mixed blessing for parents. Good programs are educational in a creative, entertaining way. But, more often, television exposes children to situations, language, advertising and images that are too sophisticated for them to deal with on their own.

Parents want to guide and supervise their family's television habits but broadcasters have to help. When Congress passed the Children's Television Act in 1990, it gave some help to parents by requiring that broadcasters serve the "educational and informational needs" of children.

Working with broadcasters and advocacy groups, parents are using this law to improve the quality of what television offers kids. On page 13, there's more about this effort.

"TV doesn't give kids a chance to develop their own imagination. . . everything is shown. . . everything is easily accomplished. When kids see this, the real world becomes frustrating. I think it hurts a child's self-esteem."

- Middle School Teacher

TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO BE A TV CRITIC

For better or worse, children learn from television. Younger children may shape their "pretend" games around super heroes while older children may choose TV characters for role models. No matter what amount of television children watch, they need to learn **how** to watch it.

As soon as children are old enough to watch television, they are old enough to learn to be critical viewers. You can give your children these lifelong skills with a small investment of time.

"Television often sacrifices reality for the sake of entertainment. Kids need to understand that and to see it for themselves."

- High School Teacher

SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

The majority of what children see on television is intended for adults. And many shows, which originally aired in prime time, are now available to kids after school in reruns.

Kids need to see that these shows were created as entertainment and rarely have anything to do with the way people live. They need to learn that complicated problems are not solved in thirty minutes and that actions **do** demand accountability.

When you're watching TV with your kids. . .

- Ask for your children's thoughts about what they're seeing.
- Talk about how the TV characters solved their problems and see if you can come up with a better (or more realistic) solution.
- Discuss TV violence. Try to decide why it happened and see if you can find a non-violent solution to the same situation.
- Use sensitive themes to start family discussions.
- Vote on whether or not each show is worth watching again.