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CHILD & FAMILY  
GUIDANCE CENTER**

CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

SEP 11 1995

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September 7, 1995

MM Docket 93-48

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20554

No. of Copies rec'd 0  
List ABCDE

Dear Commissioners,

The quality of children's television does effect kids. The research conducted over several decades clearly shows that children's attitudes, behaviors and beliefs about the world around them are critically influenced by what they see on television. None the less, children's shows are still a constant barrage of violence. And the negative effects continue.

**Violence is Still Hot**

Last November the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council ruled that the American TV show "Power Rangers" was too violent for Canadian television.<sup>1</sup> One of the top rated shows in this country, millions of children sit mesmerized in front of the television, hound parents to buy the little action figures and take them to the Power Ranger movie. The Power Rangers are a hot commodity, and they are hot because of the violence.

**And It Still Effects Viewers**

Television shows regularly show characters resorting to violence to solve problems and interpersonal dilemmas. According to Katharine Heintz-

<sup>1</sup> Farnsworth, C. The New York Times, Nov 4, 1994 v 144 pB18(N) pA9 col 1.

**The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute • Early Childhood Study Center • Abuse Prevention & Treatment Program • Single Parent Action Network • Hispanic Family Life Project • Crime Victims Advocacy, Consultation, Therapy & Support • Family Support Program for Developmental Disabilities • Psycho-Educational Assessment Team • Family Bereavement Program • Turnabout**

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Supported by: State of New York Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; The Nassau County Youth Board; New York State Department of Social Services; Long Island's United Way; Great Neck United Community Fund, Inc.; Community Chest of Port Washington; Manhasset Community Fund



Knowles and Children Now "On commercial broadcast networks, a majority of the child characters engage in anti-social behaviors, and those behaviors often yield positive results for the characters." <sup>2</sup> Although television does show substantial numbers of positive behaviors they also show substantial amounts of physical aggression. **And characters using aggression are rewarded with success about half of the time.**

Exposure to violence desensitizes children to real-life aggression. Kids watching the movie Karate Kid were less likely to summon help when they saw two kids becoming violent than children who watched scenes from Olympic competition.<sup>3</sup> Exposure to violence does encourage kids to be aggressive,<sup>4</sup> and children already prone to aggressive behavior are even more vulnerable.

### **Why Television is Violent**

The poor quality of children's television can not be attributed to a lack of finances among viewers. The children's market, as estimated by advertisers and marketers to youngsters, runs into the BILLIONS both in the purchases they make, and the purchases they influence. According to one estimate children 6 to 14 years of age spend about \$7 billion a year and influence \$120 - 150 billion in purchases by their parents.<sup>5</sup>

So, why is children's television violent? Because writers and producers have found it to be the cheapest way to keep children's attention on the screen and watching the commercial messages. Studies of children's attention have found that kids are drawn to action rather than dialogue, but it takes creativity to come up with something more than punches and karate kicks. It is simpler and easier to rely on violence to keep kids watching. But the quality of children's television should not be determined by what is convenient for program writers and producers. It should be determined by what is good for children. And because broadcasters get their license to air these programs from the people, through the government, they have the responsibility, obligation and duty to present programming which is good for kids.

---

<sup>2</sup> Keintz-Knowles, Katherine. 1995. The Reflection On The Screen: Television's image of children. Los Angeles: Children Now.

<sup>3</sup> Molitor, F., Hirsch, K.W. 1994. Children's toleration of real-life aggression after exposure to media violence: A replication of the Drabman and Thomas studies. Child Study Journal, 24(3), 191-207,

<sup>4</sup> Paik, H. and Comstock, G. 1994. The effects of television violence on antisocial behavior: A meta-analysis. Communication Research, vol. 21(4). 516-546.

<sup>5</sup> Guber, S. and Berry, J. 1993. Marketing To and Through Kids. New York: McGraw-Hill.

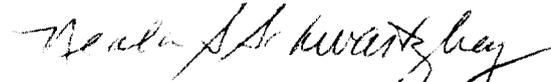
September 7, 1995

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As a children's mental health agency, we are greatly concerned over the quality of children's lives and the influences exerted by their environment. We may not be able to legislate good parenting (much as we would like to), but we can make certain that those groups who are given public trust and derive financial benefit from public resources produce quality programming for our children. We urge you to support requirements to improve the quality of children's television. We don't let our children subsist on candy and junk food even though they might like that. We are concerned that they eat healthy foods. We can't let our children watch junk television.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.  
Research Services Coordinator

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SEP 25 1995

FCC MAIL ROOM

3221 Fircrest  
Caldwell, Id.  
September 20, 1995

FCC, Office of the Secretary  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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To Whom It May Concern ;

In answer to your request for comments on how broadcasters can fulfill the Childrens TV Act, I would suggest that there would be more programs to encourage the appreciation of classical music. I feel the younger generation is missing out on learning the importance of classical music and how it has played apart in history ----learning also that it is not boring and can be fun, exciting, relaxing, and much much more.

Programs on how the instruments developed and how they are made could be produced in an interesting way ( even using cartoons).

I also suggest that more programs feature good family relationships and high moral standards ---not the Roseanne type or the Nanny type !!!!

It is a shame that so much of TV has been used to downgrade our society's values, when it could have been used to up-lift and educate with good moral standards and still be interesting and entertaining.

In view of the fact that so much of TV prograqmming is not worthwhile and features violence and sex and poor family images, it so important that more emphasis be put on up-grading the whole TV industry morally and educationally.

Thank you for your concern,

*Mildred L. Mattson*

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SEP 25 1995

**From:** Unprivileged user <nobody@wwa.com>  
**To:** A16.A16(KIDSTV)  
**Date:** 9/24/95 4:36pm  
**Subject:** Spectrum Giveaway; NO!!

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

It's bad enough that in this period of drastic belt-tightening that Congress feels a necessity to spend billions on defense items that the military has said that it didn't need in the first place. This kind of so-called budget cutting really provides the citizenry that Congress has lost its accountability and that many needed programs supported by both sides will go under regardless of the popular public support

This new atrocity has me shaking. Where is all the talk about getting Government finances under control? Where is the rhetoric about structuring the Government to operate like a business? This giveaway simply solidifies the constant impression that Congress operates on corporate incentive from day to day

There is no reason that I have seen that broadcasters are going to be shut out of potential market due to government interference. The broadcasters will receive a return on their investment so quickly that the initial cost of purchasing some of these airwaves will seem like just another legal settlement hit on funds.

PLEASE, DO NOT THROW AWAY THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE!

John Andrews  
106 Lexington Ave.  
Franklin Square, NY 11010

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From: <g1315drich@umbsky.cc.umb.edu>  
To: A16.A16(kidstv)  
Date: 9/25/95 3:33pm  
Subject: Children's Television Act

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September 25, 1995

Dear Madam or Sir,

One of the best ways for the Federal Communication Commission to fulfill the Children's Television Act's objectives is to advocate for the inclusion of children's programming which begins to combat -- rather than reinforce -- the horrors of homophobia. Promote positive gay, lesbian, and bisexual role models and address the issues of tolerance and promote diversity, which includes gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.

As media critic William Henry noted, "Children's shows never acknowledge that [homosexuality] exists, although many adult homosexuals report having been aware of their specific sexual identity by age four or five."

This systematic censorship contributes directly to the suffering of young gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, maintaining their invisibility, isolation, and stigmatization.

For television to meet the educational and informational needs of ALL children, this silence must be broken.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Richards  
155 Strathmore Rd. #4  
Boston, MA 02135  
617-782-2118

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SEP 25 1995

**From:** Eileen M Sieli <sieli@mtnet1.mt.att.com>  
**To:** A16.A16(kidstv)  
**Date:** 9/25/95 11:39am  
**Subject:** Kids TV

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY

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To: FCC

I am writing about the lack of quality television for children and the lack of consideration given this matter by the television networks. I have an eight year old daughter and find there is very little she can view for entertainment between 8:00 and 9:00 PM. All major network shows are loaded with sexual dialogue and activities.

This season the networks may have reduced violence during the family time, but have bombarded us with sex. Even the so called "family" shows thrive on sexual dialogue and situations. There is no regard for morality and for families trying to instill wholesome morals as part of their family values.

I am outraged at the adult line up of shows that are scheduled during the traditional family hour. The line up of prime time shows totally disregards the family and our children. I cannot see how these broadcasters are serving the entire public when they focus on the sector of the population that is 18-49 years old. These networks are NOT providing any benefit to the public and in my opinion are doing our children harm.

It is a shame that we have progressed technically, but at the expense of our moral obligations to our children. As a concerned parent, I hope that the FCC will act on this issue and improve the quality of television for our children.

Sincerely,  
Eileen Sieli sieli@att.com

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DEM  
SEP 25 1995

**From:** Mark Gabrielson <markjeff@star.net>  
**To:** A16.A16(kidstv)  
**Date:** 9/23/95 9:21am  
**Subject:** MM Docket 93-48

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

September 23, 1995

To Federal Communications Commission, Office of the Secretary

As a concerned citizen I want to bring to your attention, in reference to your desire for public comment on how broadcasters can best fulfill the Children's Television Act's objectives, that one audience has been neglected or ignored by broadcasters. This group is lesbian, gay and bisexual youth.

On a whole the adult lesbian, gay and bisexual population has been grossly underrepresented or misaligned on television. However, the lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are seldom represented on television or even recognized as members of the viewing public. This could be deemed censorship by broadcasters because it contributes directly to the suffering of young gays and lesbians, by maintaining their invisibility, making them feel isolated and that their feelings are stigmatized. Of course, heterosexual youth -- some of whom will become parents of a lesbian or gay child -- are also not being educated about homosexuality. This situation surely exacerbates the national climate of hate violence, in which lesbians and gays are the MOST frequent victims of hate crimes and YOUNG heterosexuals are the most frequent attackers.

More importantly, our youth need to see positive representation. Entering the teenage years is a traumatic time for all youth. Less not forget that this is a time when youth begin determining who they are. In our society this process is being exacerbated for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth. Inexcusably, broadcasters continue to overlook the enormous potential of children's television for combating homophobia. Even multicultural programs like "Ghostwriter" and "Sesame Street" -- which specifically aim to teach tolerance and promote diversity -- have had NOTHING to say about homosexuality or homophobia. For television to meet the educational and informational needs of ALL children, this silence must be broken.

If you don't think there are youth out there who are feeling pain, isolation, and stigmatization because they are dealing with being lesbian, gay or bisexual, just lurk through the Usenet newsgroup soc.support.youth.gay-lesbian-bi. This is a moderated newsgroup where lesbian, gay and bisexual youth can go and find support they might not otherwise find at home, in school, or in society as a whole. These youth, as well as all people, need to see lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in a positive fashion. If you read some of the postings there you'll definitely see we are not addressing the needs of these youth.

Television is a powerful mechanism and positive, visible representation of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth will help society as a whole. We are a pluralistic society, so please, lets have the most public medium represent all of society -- not just certain segments.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark Gabrielson  
17 Conway St  
Beverly, MA 01915

cc: Senator Edward Kennedy  
Representative Peter Torkildsen

CC: Rep Peter Torkildsen <torkma06@hr.house.gov>

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SEP 25 1995

From: Patricia Dexheimer <dex@tenet.edu>  
To: A16.A16(kidstv)  
Date: 9/22/95 5:54pm  
Subject: 1990 Children's TV Act

DOCKET FILE NO. 95-1101-1000 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

To Whom It May Concern,

I have just read an article in the Sept. 11 US News & World Report regarding the FCC's request for public input on strengthening the 1990 Children's TV Act. I would like to add my voice to the chorus that supports the act and bemoans the fact that it is so weakly implemented.

The broadcasters insist that they do produce kids' TV, and that they shouldn't have to produce much since so many cable channels produce such excellent kids' TV. This is absurd. Broadcasters, those that use the public airwaves for free and provide a public service, need to serve their communities and not just make money from them. Current TV fare is all aimed at getting as many 18 to 35-year-olds to watch as possible, to the exclusion of news, of intelligent analysis of current events, of providing educational and edifying programming for children. It does not matter if the broadcasters cannot force children to watch this programming; it is their duty as guardians of the public commonwealth to provide it. It is true that most kids will watch junk on TV, but for the few that do watch educational TV it is imperative that it be there. True, there may be very few children who grow up to be scientists because they watched Beakman's World, but the simple fact is that such a show benefits society greatly because the relative minority of kids that watch it will gain some kind of understanding about something, be it science or logic or history.

The 1990 act was designed to promote and require this kind of programming, and I must say I see few instances of it. I do not know if there were any provisions in the Act to reduce violence on kids' TV, but it surely needs some. A great many kids' TV shows are based on violence and gruesome fighting techniques. I don't think kids need to be watching this stuff, certainly in a country where it is so easy to get hold of deadly weapons.

I must also say that the FCC's enforcement of media law is lackadaisical at best. I currently work at a network that flaunts the rules for how many commercials can be shown per hour, what qualifies as kids' or "family" programming, and on and on. Just because the current legislature wants to disassemble the government to more effectively allow big business to tell us all what to do, does not mean that the FCC should not uphold its mandate.

Thank you for your time. I apologize for the incoherence of this letter, but I have just completed my graduate thesis and my brain is a little frazzled.

Sincerely,  
Derek Dexheimer  
2205 Kenley St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76107  
817 737 6989

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1717 73-40  
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SEP 25 1995

**From:** Donald Reeves <73214.441@compuserve.com>  
**To:** Julius Genachowski <kidstv@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** 9/23/95 11:57pm  
**Subject:** Mandatory minimum educational TV

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

This is in response to your invitation in TNR to send comments on the subject of mandatory minimum hours of educational TV for children. My contribution is that it is not reasonable to expect that commercial TV will provide any kind of quality programming, whether for children, adults, or in between. The decision to allow advertising on TV, made many years ago, condemned it forever to serve that purpose alone. The same thing applies to commercial radio.

An additional insurmountable problem is that there can be no consensus on what constitutes children's educational programming in a society as polarized as ours. Can you seriously entertain the possibility that there could be any consensus in this society on anything directed at children that is more complicated than the alphabet?

Wait for a better time in history. Don't delude yourself that the current majority will allow the government to do anything constructive.

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