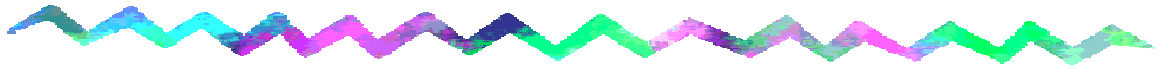


**Ready to
Learn
User's
Guide for
Families**



Guidelines for Rating Children's Television

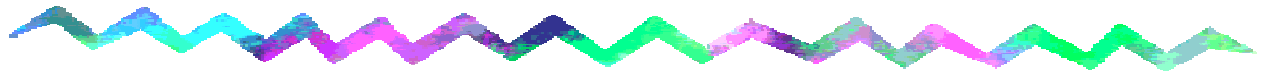
Here are some guidelines to help you judge what kind of programs will be beneficial for your children. Put this right near the TV and share that ideas in simple terms with your children.

TELEVISION IS FINE WHEN:

- It encourages creativity and critical thinking.
- It engages your children to sing along, dance along and respond.
 - It entertains your children.
- It reinforces the values that are important to you.
- It inspires your children to want to learn more.
- It helps your children to appreciate other cultures.
 - It inspires your children to want to read.

TELEVISION IS A PROBLEM WHEN:

- It exposes children to violence as a means of solving problems.
- It introduces subject matter that's not appropriate for children.
 - It occupies too much of your children's time.
- It encourages children to think that they need to buy products.
 - It presents gender, racial, or cultural stereotypes.



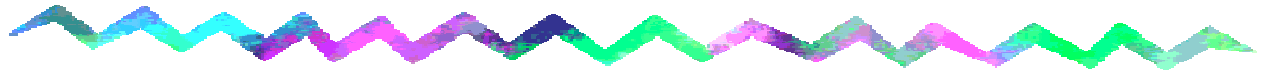
Children and Television

We know that children like television. It attracts them like a magnet. They are drawn to the sounds, colors and motion. They respond to its messages quickly.

Quality programs for children, like those on the PBS Ready to Learn Service, can have a positive impact on your children's behavior, thinking, and language. Yet even the best children's series require your participation to help children get the most from what they watch.

To help young children get the most from television:

- **Select specific programming.** Choose programming that is geared to your children's ages and interests. Watch programs, not just television.
- **Co-View with your children.** When possible, watch programs with your children so you can help them understand the material. Join in the program's activities along with your kids.
- **Extend the learning.** Read books and do activities that relate to the themes of programs your children like.
- **Encourage active viewing.** Help your children to understand that they can dance and sing along. Encourage them to express their reactions to things they see and hear on television.
- **Limit television time.** Remember, your children need lots of time to move, talk, play and interact with others. Set clear guidelines for when and how long the TV can be on.



PBS is Television and More

PBS offers commercial-free children's television with ideas for learning between the programs, rather than sales messages. These learning tips support the programs you children love by emphasizing specific themes:

Go find out! Encouraging children to acquire information.

Try it out! Encouraging children to try new and different things, and to learn from their own experiences.

Ask for help! Encouraging children to seek assistance from adults and peers to enhance their learning process.

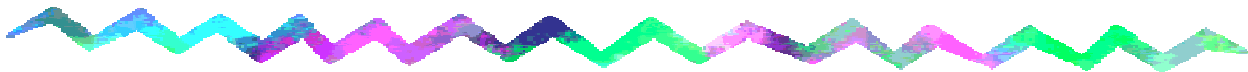
Talk it out! Encouraging children to work through problems by talking, sharing and compromising.

Stick to it! Encouraging children to be patient and work to overcome obstacles to reach their goals.

You can do it! Empowering children and reinforcing their sense of self-work and individuality.

Publications

PBS Families is a magazine full of information for families and caregivers, and program related activities for preschoolers and school-age children. It is available in English and Spanish.



Selecting the Best for Your Children

All television teaches young children *something*, whether or not the series describes itself as “educational.”

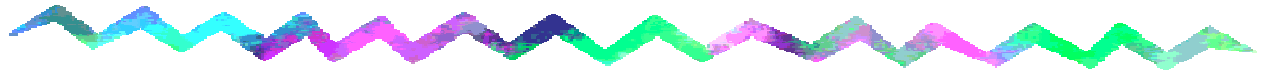
You are careful about the people who surround your children. You want to know the attitudes of the teachers and babysitters who have an influence on your children’s thinking and behavior. You get to know your children’s friends. The same care is appropriate when it comes to considering what television is right for your children.

It’s important to select programs that have been specially designed to speak to young children in language they understand. They to find programs that encourage your children to adopt an attitude of cooperation, non-violent problem solving and respect for people of different cultures, races, and abilities.

When young children see “heroes” use violence to solve problems this may send a message that force is an acceptable way for “good guys” to get things done. If the “bad guys” are funny looking, disfigured, or disabled in some way, this may send a message that badness is linked to physical appearance. If they talk with an accent, speak a different language, or are members of minority groups, this may to children that people who are different are bad.

If children see women portrayed as helpless and always in need of men to take care of them, they may get the message that women aren’t strong, capable or smart.

Select television series’ that teach the values that you believe in and help you children to better understand their world.



What About the News?

We might think that it is educational for children to watch the news to find out more about the world. Unfortunately, most television news tends to focus 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 that children need in order to understand an incident.

Because preschoolers don't have much experience in the world, they lack the "filter" that adults have to understand and digest events. The 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 books you read to them and television shows that are designed especially for their age group and level of understanding.

A word about violence...

Most children initially find violent images upsetting. But when they are seen over and over again, the images become routine and less frightening. Even the fighting on cartoon shows and video games can increase the likelihood of your children beginning to see violence as an acceptable way to respond to problems and conflicts. The PBS series' show children many other ways to resolve problems peacefully.



Extend the Learning with Activities



Notice what interests your children when they watch TV.



Plan activities that reinforce a show's content.



Include children in planning activities



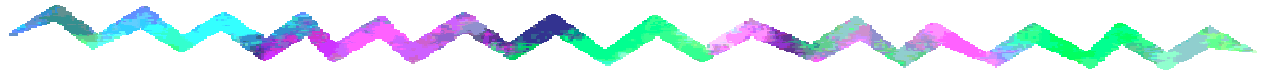
Link your children's experiences to what they've seen.



Provide props so they can re-enact situations in play.



Keep art materials (paper, crayons, scissors, glue) available.



Extend the Value of What Children View

Young children learn by interacting with the people and objects around them. Direct hands-on experiences and repetition help them to digest information and retain it. PBS series can give you some great ideas for fun and interesting ways to do this. Here are some general tips:

Plan Activities that Reinforce a Program's Content

If a program takes you on a tour of a pretzel factory, for instance, try making pretzels at home. You and your child can make pretzels out of playdough or clay. If you feel more ambitious, bake real pretzels.

Link your Children's Experiences to What's Been Seen

Point out connections to your children as you go through daily routines: "We are cooperating just the way Big Bird one we saw on *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*. Shall we go in and see what it's like inside?"

Re-enact Situations in Dramatic Play

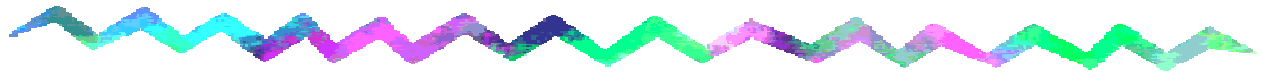
Encourage your children to recreate that places and situations that they enjoyed watching on television. Help them find props to make the store, bank, railroad station, or imaginary place that captured their interest. Offer to be whichever character they would like you to be in their games.

Extend the Learning Through Art Activities

Suggest that your children make drawings or paintings of places and characters they like to see on television. You can even help them construct scenes from favorite programs using household items such as milk cartons, straws, paper towel rolls and lots of imagination.

Extend the Learning With Books

Find books that reinforce themes presented on television programs that your children watch. Help the children to make connections between the material and characters they like on television and the stories you enjoy together.



Extend the Learning with Activities After the Program is Over

These activities are related to the goal of developing self-confidence and awareness of others. This is an important goal in all of the PBS series. Along with the activity, we have listed some of the series where you will see these concepts emphasized.

- **Make an “All About Me” Book**

Select some photographs with your children and put them into an album or past them on paper. Ask your children to say something about what they were doing or feeling when the picture was taken. Write down what they say as a caption. Read and enjoy the book often.

(Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, Sesame Street, Barney & Friends)

- **Make an “I Can Do It” list**

Hang up a large piece of paper where your child can see it easily and title it the “I Can do List.” Whenever your children learn a new skill, such as sliding down a slide or feeding the dog, add it to the list.

(Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, Sesame Street, Barney & Friends)

- **Celebrate Your Children’s Work**

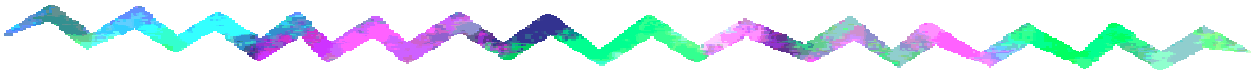
Create a special area to display your children’s art work. Let your children decide what should be put up and when it should be taken down.

(Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, Sesame Street)

- **Play the “I Like You” Rhyming Game**

Tell your children something you like about them and make a rhyme, serious or silly. “I like your nose, it smells like a rose.” “I like your hair, it’s really there.” Let your children have turns doing the same thing for you if they want to.

(Sesame Street, Puzzle Place, Arthur)



These activities are related to the goal of **nurturing your child's imagination**. This is an important goal in all of the PBS series.

- **Make an Imagination Bag**

Put various items, such as paper towel roll, a spoon, a scarf, a plastic bowl, and a feather, into a large paper bag. Taking turns with your children, close your eyes to pick out something from the bag. Then use it in an imaginative way, announcing what it is. For instance, "This paper towel roll is now my telescope."

(Barney & Friends, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood)

- **Take an imaginary trip**

Ask your children to pick out an unusual place to visit, such as the moon, a cloud, a mountain top. Figure out together what you would want to take and what would happen. Act out your trip together.

(The Puzzle Place, Barney & Friends, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood)

- **Play the "What If" Game**

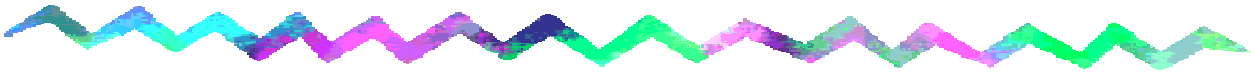
This is a good activity for long car rides, waiting in lines, or drying off after the bath. Give your children a situation and ask them to figure out what should happen. "What if you got to day care and your new teacher was a giraffe?" "What if you had magic power every time you clapped your hands...what would you make happen?"

(Barney & Friends, The Puzzle Place)

- **Play "The Continuing Story Game"**

Start a story and stop right in the middle of a sentence. Ask your child to continue and to stop when they want you to take it over. Keep the story going until one of you comes up with an ending.

(Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, Barney & Friends)



These activities are related to the goal of **thinking about what we hear and see**. This is an important goal in all of the PBS series.

- **Become Sound Detectives**

Pick a place to go for a walk with your children – a park, a grocery store, a construction site. Encourage your children to notice sounds and help them name each sound they hear. Keep a list of all the sounds they discover and where they heard them. If you go on several expeditions you can put the lists together and make a “sounds in my neighborhood” book.

(Sesame Street)

- **Play the Echo Game**

Take turns with your children making sounds and echoing them back. First make sounds using only your own bodies – vocal, hands and feet. Try to imitate the sound as closely as possible. Then try a rhythm echo. Tap out a beat with a spoon or your hands and have your children repeat the rhythm.

(Sesame Street, Barney & Friends)

- **Become Color Detectives**

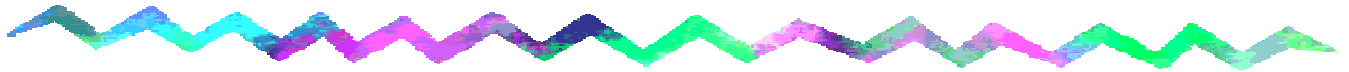
Pick a place to walk to with your children and take some crayons with you. Each time your children notice a color, write a description of what has that color. Ask your children to find the crayon that most closely matches the color and make a mark next to the description. If you go on several expeditions, you can put your lists together and make a ‘colors in my neighborhood’ book.

(Barney & Friends, Sesame Street)

- **Play the “Look Closely” game**

Gather together a few indoor and outdoor objects, such as leaves, stones, paper napkins, small bits of material. Let your children look at each object under and magnifying glass. Discuss how the objects looks with and without the magnifying glass.

(Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, Sesame Street)



Extend the Learning with Books

Reading with children is lots of fun and helps them to:

- Develop language and listening skills
 - Increase their vocabularies
- Learn the relationship between sounds they hear and written words
 - Explore a variety of places and situations
 - Become good readers

Select books that highlight the themes in the shows your children have viewed. For instance, if a show has dealt with cooperation, read a story in which the characters work together toward a common goal.

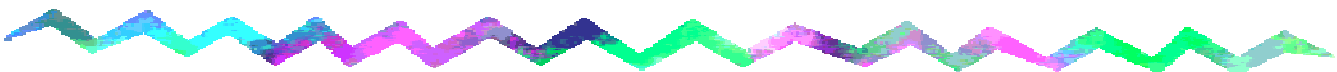
Discuss similarities between the books and the program. Ask the children if anything in the book reminds them of something they saw on television. Encourage them to discuss what was the same and what was different.

Encourage your children to “read” to you. After you have read a book several times and it is familiar, let the children “read” it to you, relying on their memories and the pictures. Let them know that their variations on the text are fine.

Help the children to “write” their own books based on stories you’ve read and programs you’ve watched. Write down exactly what they say and encourage them to illustrate the pages. Keep paper, crayons and markers available so children can draw and “write” their own books whenever they wish.

Enjoy listening to stories on Reading Rainbow. Check your favorite ones out from the library so you can enjoy them again and again.

Make reading time special. Turn off the TV, get comfortable together and enjoy sharing the pleasure of a special book!



Plan some activities and read some books to further your education and curiosity about the subjects of your favorite television shows.

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>

Weekly Viewing Schedule

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
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7:00 AM	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur		
7:30 AM	Zoboomafoo	Zoboomafoo	Zoboomafoo	Zoboomafoo	Zoboomafoo		
8:00 AM	Barney & Friends	Barney & Friends	Barney & Friends	Barney & Friends	Barney & Friends	Sesame Street	Sesame Street
8:30 AM	Teletubbies	Teletubbies	Teletubbies	Teletubbies	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Sesame Street
9:00 AM	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street		The Big Comfy Couch
9:30 AM	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Sesame Street		Puzzle Place
10:00 AM	Mister Rogers' Neighborhood	Mister Rogers' Neighborhood	Mister Rogers' Neighborhood	Mister Rogers' Neighborhood	Mister Rogers' Neighborhood		Dragon Tales
10:30 AM	Between The Lions	Between The Lions	Between The Loins	Between The Lions	Between The Lions		Arthur
11:00 AM	Dragon Tales	Dragon Tales	Dragon Tales	Dragon Tales	Dragon Tales		Wishbone
11:30 AM	Wimzie's House	Wimzie's House	Wimzie's House	Wimzie's House	Wimzie's House		
NOON	Noddy	Noddy	Noddy	Noddy	Noddy		
3:00 PM	Theodore Tugboat	Theodore Tugboat	Theodore Tugboat	Theodore Tugboat	Theodore Tugboat		
3:30 PM	Reading Rainbow	Reading Rainbow	Reading Rainbow	Reading Rainbow	Reading Rainbow		
4:00 PM	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur	Arthur		
4:30 PM	Wishbone	Wishbone	Wishbone	Wishbone	Wishbone		
5:00 PM	Zoom	Zoom	Zoom	Zoom	Zoom		
5:30 PM	Kratts' Creatures	Kratts' Creatures	Kratts' Creatures	Kratts' Creatures	Kratts' Creatures		

