

Parents and Guardians,

Often times we hear reports about how bad television is for children. It exposes them to violence, adult themes, and inappropriate language.

All television is not that way. Below are some suggestions on how to make TV time educational, fun, and safe for your children to watch.

- The first step is to choose a television program with your child. (PBS offers many good programs – go to <http://www.pbs.org/whatson/index.html> on the Internet for your local schedule.) Children should have a say in what they watch, but you as the parent make the final decision. It is up to you to make sure a program is age appropriate.
- Second, watch the program with your child. Children will follow your example. Your choice in shows – good or bad – can make a difference.
- Third, use the show to start a conversation with your child. Below are just a few ideas:
 - Ask your child what he thinks will happen next.
 - Make a game out of words used in the show.
Examples:
Listen for words that rhyme.
Listen for words that start with the same letter as the child's name.
Listen for proper nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
 - Discuss what the characters are feeling. How do you know? Ask your child how she would feel in the character's position. What would she do to keep or change the feeling?
 - Discuss the choices that the characters make. Are they good or bad choices? Why?
 - Discuss if anything similar has ever happened to your child in real life.
 - Discuss the difference between reality and fantasy. Can someone's feelings really get hurt? Can an airplane really talk?

Viewing television as a family gives parents better control over what their children are watching, provides quality time together, encourages children to be active television viewers, and promotes independent thinking. Discussing thoughts about the shows gives parents a chance to find out what is happening in their children's lives. Practicing word skills reinforces the lessons taught in school, and gives the message that school is important.

