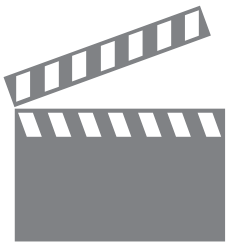


Raising Media Savvy Children:

Nine Suggestions for Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers

You CAN raise media savvy kids and teach them to be smart media consumers!



- 1.** Actively engage children in **talking, playing, reading, listening** to books and music, **and creating** imaginative games. Providing children with these alternatives to television is fun, develops emotional and social bonds, and nourishes young brains.
- 2.** Emphasize **non-directed play** with children, encouraging them to entertain themselves using materials at hand in new ways. Suggest that they experiment, create roles, and practice skills—activities that develop imagination, creativity, and self-reliance.
- 3.** Help children recognize both **the good and the bad** in media consumption. Media are complex, carefully created commercial industry products whose main purpose is to sell values, behaviors, and consumerism through entertaining and emotional stimuli. Cultivate “critical appreciation” skills with your child (what is good and what is bad about this media experience?), rather than simply “demonizing” media.
- 4.** Develop **consistent limits for screen consumption**—TV, computer, and video games. Explain to children that a parent’s job is to supervise the family media “diet.” Television, movies, video games, and online fare often promote simplistic stereotypes, gratuitous violence, mindless repetition, or simply run counter to your family’s values.
- 5. Learn media’s persuasive techniques and teach them to your children.** Consuming media with your kids provides you with opportunities to discuss advertising’s emphasis on toys, sugary foods, caffeinated drinks, or to talk about stereotypes, the promotion of addictive behavior, or issues surrounding violence or body image. Celebrate positive media portrayals, too, when they appear!
- 6.** Watch **programs on tape**, so you can stop to discuss content and fast-forward through commercials. Television and other image-driven media are powerful, multi-sensory teachers of values. Even under the best of circumstances, it is difficult for parents to be as persuasive.
- 7.** Insist that children be **critical media consumers**. Ask them questions, activating the brain’s neo-cortex, where higher-level thinking (analysis, reflection, synthesis) takes place. Don’t let passive acceptance of media messages become the norm.
- 8.** Investigate the **media habits of babysitters, daycare centers, and other caregivers**. Be wary of those who continually use television, computer games, or the Internet to keep children occupied.
- 9.** Encourage children to **produce their own media** whenever possible. Art, writing projects, music making, and video/film production are not only fun and engaging activities, but will also help children cultivate their own independent and creative sense.

Visit www.acmecoalition.org for more info on media curricula, activities, and resources.



Brought to you by the Action Coalition for Media Education
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