



## Electronic Media Violence & Kids

### The Facts

Children have a number of recreational opportunities at hand currently. The trend that seems to be on the rise is electronic media. Television, videos, music, movies and video/computer games are replacing the age-old traditions of recreation. These fast paced, attractive and alluring forms of entertainment are intriguing to a child. Media is amazing in the way it advances, helps educate and powerfully communicates.

It has been reported by Nielsen Media Research, that on average within a day a child may watch three hours of television. By the time they reach kindergarten, 4,000 hours of watching television would have been accumulated. When they finish elementary school, they would have viewed nearly 8,000 murders and 100,000 various acts of violence. These numbers may seem outrageous. However, when faced with the fact that two-thirds of programming has violence portrayed in it, these statistics become more realistic and believable.

Media violence may seem unharmful and unnoticeable to an adult. This is because violence has embedded itself into our society as something normal and a part of everyday life. To a child, violence in the media confirms that aggressive behavior is condoned and acceptable. As a result, a child may become increasingly aggressive in the way he acts towards others.

### Helpful Hints

Behaviors and perceptions are highly predisposed by television and other forms of media. Parents should be concerned with how their children view the real world versus the world portrayed in television. Here are a few helpful hints in gaining that distinction, provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Set a standard of only one to two hours of television per day, provided that it is quality television. This rule can be initiated towards all forms of electronic media also.
- Don't let your child have a television in his/her room
- Don't allow children under the age of two to watch television



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- Supervise and make sure that your child is watching informational, educational and nonviolent television programs. In addition, monitor what types of video games, music and movies they partake in.
- Watch T.V., play video games or attend movies with your kids and talk about the realities behind them.
- Utilize programs associated with controversial topics, as a tool in discussing issues related to sex, violence, drugs, etc.
- Record educational programs for future viewing.
- Come up with other types of entertainment.

## Alternatives for Kids

- Partake in local volunteer programs
- Practice playing a musical instrument
- Explore zoos, libraries, museums, parks, historical sites, etc...
- Go for a walk, hike, jog or run
- Join a sports team through school or community programs
- Play a board game or cards
- Illustrate a drawing, painting or sculpture
- Keep a diary
- Read a book, magazine or newspaper
- Write a letter

Parents, friends, school and even media influence children. With this in mind educate your child about the rights and wrongs behind media. The most important lesson to teach your child is that violence is not entertainment.

Produced by  
**PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) (800) 457-2736**  
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 Information for this PIP TIP collected from a variety of research based resources.

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Adapted from:  
 Parent Pointers: Media violence affects children  
 familyeducation.com: Fighting Media Violence  
 ACT Against Violence: Media Violence and Children  
 Parentsplace.com: 101 TV-free Alternatives

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