



## Where We Stand: Children's Programming

Violence (/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Crime-Violence-and-Your-Child.aspx) is a part of our society. Among the many factors that contribute to this sad reality is the prevalence of violence in the media that surrounds us.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has studied the research (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-1298>) that proves virtual violence (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Virtual-Violence-Impacts-Childrens-Behavior.aspx) in television shows, movies, video games, apps and the internet has a clear effect on the behavior of children and makes them more likely to use violence and aggression (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Aggressive-Behavior.aspx) in the real world to resolve conflicts.



Together, parents, broadcasters, and advertisers must be responsible for the media that children consume. The AAP strongly supports legislative efforts to improve the quality of children's programming.

### AAP Recommendations for the Entertainment Industry:

- **Protect the youngest viewers.** Do not feature violence in any media developed for very young children (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/healthy-digital-media-use-habits-for-babies-toddlers-preschoolers.aspx). Children under age 6 can't always tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Don't advertise to this age group, either, since young children can't tell paid ads apart from factual information.
- **Show consequences.** Avoid glamorizing weapons or showing violence as an acceptable way to solve problems. Violence and hateful language should be part of thoughtfully presented, serious drama that also show the destructive consequences, pain, and loss such words and actions can have on victims and perpetrators.
- **Not funny and not sexy.** Don't use violence as a comic punch line or in sexual situations that suggests violence is amusing, fun, or exciting.
- **Do no harm.** Video games (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Video-Games-Set-Your-Own-Ratings-System.aspx) should not use human or other living targets or award points for killing, because this teaches children to associate pleasure and success with their ability to cause pain and suffering to others.
- **More family-friendly ratings.** Take steps to ensure a more reliable and "parent-friendly" rating system (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/TV-Ratings-A-Guide-for-Parents.aspx) that includes impartial oversight beyond the industry. Give an R rating for movies showing smoking or tobacco use (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Smoking-in-the-Movies.aspx).

### What Parents Can Do:

The AAP encourages parents to manage both the quantity (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/The-Benefits-of-Limiting-TV.aspx) and the quality of their family's screen time (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Where-We-Stand-TV-Viewing-Time.aspx) (including television programs, movies, computers, smartphones, and video games), by co-viewing, and co-playing with them when possible. Parents can create a Family Media Use Plan (/English/media/Pages/default.aspx) and model appropriate media use. Impartial ratings, such as those issued by Common Sense Media (<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>), can help guide selection.

Remember, your opinions count—make your voices heard. You can advocate to legislators, media producers, and advertisers to improve children's programming and reduce the amount of inappropriate content. For more information from the Federal Communications Commission (<http://reboot.fcc.gov/parents/>), visit [reboot.fcc.gov/parents](http://reboot.fcc.gov/parents) (<http://reboot.fcc.gov/parents>).

## Additional Information & Resources:

[Back to Top](#)

- [Age-Appropriate Media: Can You Trust Movie and TV Ratings? \(/English/family-life/Media/Pages/TV-Ratings-A-Guide-for-Parents.aspx\)](#)
- [How Virtual Violence Impacts Children's Behavior: Steps for Parents \(/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Virtual-Violence-Impacts-Childrens-Behavior.aspx\)](#)
- [Video Games: Establish Your Own Family's Ratings System \(/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Video-Games-Set-Your-Own-Ratings-System.aspx\)](#)
- [Virtual Violence \(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-1298\)](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-1298) (AAP Policy Statement)
- [Media and Young Minds \(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-2591\)](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-2591) (AAP Policy Statement)

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