

## Monitoring Your Child's Access to the Media

Over the years, many experts have concluded that viewing a lot of violence in the media can be risky for children. Studies have shown that watching too much violence -- whether on TV, in the movies, or in video games -- can increase the chance that children will be desensitized to violence, or even act more aggressively themselves. Pay special attention to the kinds of media your children play with or watch. Parental advisories for music, movies, TV, video, and computer games can help you choose age-appropriate media for your children. Try watching TV or playing video games with your children and talk with them about the things you see together. Encourage your children to think about what they are watching, listening to or playing -- how would they handle situations differently? Let them know why violent movies or games disturb you. For example, you might tell your 9-year-old, "Violence just isn't funny to me. In real life people who get shot have families and children, and it's sad when something bad happens to them." Watching the news and other media with your child enables you to discuss current events like war and other conflicts, and can provide an opportunity to reinforce the consequences of violence.

- Actively supervise your child's exposure to all forms of media violence
- Limit TV viewing to those programs you feel are appropriate
- Be selective about which movies your child sees and which video and computer games he plays
- Establish rules about the Internet by going on-line together to choose sites that are appropriate for your child
- Consider using monitoring tools for TV and the Internet, like the v-chip, a new technology that parents use to block TV programs they consider inappropriate
- Take advantage of the ratings system that provides parents with information about the contents of the program or movie.