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MAKING TV SAFE FOR KIDS IS NOW EASY AS 1-2-3

New TV Watch Tool Kit Helps Parents Use the TV Ratings and Parental Controls

NEW YORK, October 31, 2005 — Just because parents know what's right for their children doesn't mean they can get them to bed on time or to clean their rooms, but one thing they can do with ease is control what their kids watch on TV. All it takes is pressing a few buttons on the remote. And now TV Watch, a group that promotes the use of TV parental controls, is making it even easier with their "1-2-3 Safe TV" tool kit for parents.

The tool kit includes a downloadable guide to the TV ratings and parental controls, as well as an interactive online tutorial to show parents how to set the parental controls on their TVs. Both tools are available at www.televisionwatch.org/parents.

"Learning to set the parental controls isn't like learning to pilot a plane—it is more like learning to make toast. It's that easy. For parents who want to control what their kids see on TV, now there's no excuse," said Kathy Roeder of TV Watch.

TV Watch is also spreading the word about the new tools through an online advertising campaign directed at parents.

"1-2-3 Safe TV" shows that there are three easy steps to controlling kids' TV viewing:

Step 1: Know the Ratings

The TV ratings system is an easy-to-understand guide to the content of all TV shows, and is the first place parents should look for information about shows their children are viewing.

The ratings are grouped into two categories: shows designed for children and general ratings. Shows designed for children are rated with a Y—TV-Y, TV-Y7 and TV-Y7-FV (fantasy violence). The general ratings are similar to the movie ratings: TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14 and TV-MA. While many of these programs may be appropriate for children, they are not designed specifically for children. A travel program, for example, might be rated TV-G.

In addition to these designations, the TV ratings include content descriptors that provide additional information for parents: V (violence), FV (fantasy violence), S (sexual situations), L (coarse language) and D (suggestive dialogue).

Step 2: Decide What's Right For You And Your Family

Only parents know what their children should and should not see on TV. Parents should set aside a time to discuss what's appropriate for their children and to decide how they want to enforce these parameters in their own homes.

Step 3: Set Parental Controls

Parental controls like the v-chip and cable and satellite tools are widely available and easy to use. Many of these technologies allow parents to block shows they don't want their kids to see, using the TV ratings. Once parents decide what's right for their families, they may choose to use these tools in their homes.

"If you can turn your TV on, you can set the parental controls. Whether using the v-chip or cable or satellite tools, all it takes is just a few clicks of the remote," Roeder said.

TV Watch was launched in May 2005 by a coalition of individuals and organizations concerned about the lack of education on existing parental control tools for TV and the impact of increased government control of TV. TV Watch consists of 27 prominent individuals and organizations representing more than 4 million Americans and more than 1,900 grassroots members.

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