

# Pointers For Parents

## Smart Summer TV Guide

(NAPS)—While children look forward to summer break all year, parents may find these school-free months a little more challenging. After the novelty of running through the sprinkler wears off, you might find your children wanting to spend all their time in front of the TV.

“Controlling your child’s TV viewing is especially tough during the less-structured summer months, but it can be done,” says Sal Severe, PhD, author of *How to Behave So Your Children Will Too*. Dr. Severe suggests the following do’s and don’ts:

### DO’S

- Set time limits on how much television your child can watch per day or per week, with enough flexibility for special circumstances, like rainy days.
- Use the rating system and the parental controls that come with your TV, cable box or satellite, to screen out objectionable content when you can’t watch with your children. Information on ratings and parental control features like the v-chip can be found at [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).
- Plan ahead. Sit down with the TV guide at the beginning of the week and agree on what shows can be watched. Include some of their favorite shows as well as programs you would like them to see.
- Be consistent. Make sure that you and your partner agree on what shows your children can watch. Create a list and post it on the refrigerator to remind everyone of the rules.
- Use your VCR or DVR. If you record programs, children can play outside when it’s sunny and watch videos when it’s rain-



ing, or when you can’t watch with them.

### DON'TS

- Don’t let TV become the default entertainment or the babysitter. But simply telling the children to play outside won’t work. Parents have to provide ideas on how to enjoy non-TV time.
  - Don’t assume that if a program is non-violent or on PBS that it is necessarily consistent with your values. Try to watch at least one episode of a new program that your child wants to watch to make sure you approve of its content.
  - Avoid putting a TV in your child’s room. However if you do, activate the parental controls to block out content you don’t want your child to see.
- “TV can be both enjoyable and educational for children,” Severe says. “But only if we, as parents, live up to our responsibility to monitor and control what our children watch. These tips are the place to start for parents who need a bit of help during the unstructured days of summer.”

For additional tips on summer TV viewing, visit [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).

### Did You Know?

Parents can use the rating system and the parental control features that come with their TV, cable set-top box or satellite, to screen out objectionable content when they just don’t have the time to watch with their children. Information on ratings and parental control features such as the v-chip can be found at [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).