



Contact: Kathy Roeder (212) 419-3409

## **CONTROL WHAT YOUR KIDS WATCH WHEN AUGUST HEAT DRIVES KIDS INSIDE AND IN FRONT OF THE TV**

*TV Watch Offers Smart Summer TV Tips, Free TV Ratings Sticker for Parents*

NEW YORK, August 3, 2005 — It's just too hot to play outside. Your kids have taken refuge in the cool comfort of the air-conditioned living room. But they've also parked themselves in front of the TV for hours. How can a parent make sure that their kids aren't using all this time in front of the TV to watch shows they shouldn't? TV Watch has the answer.

The organization is giving away a free TV ratings reference sticker and Smart Summer TV tips. The sticker fits the back of your TV remote control and gives simple explanations of the TV ratings which are key to understanding the age-appropriateness and content of TV programs.

TV Watch encourages parents to understand the ratings system so they can use parental controls—such as the v-chip, cable or satellite blocking technology—to allow or block programs based on their rating. The free TV ratings reference stickers, and a more detailed explanation of the ratings system and parental controls, are available at [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).

### **SMART SUMMER TV TIPS**

In consultation with TV Watch member Dr. Sal Severe, Ph.D. and author of *How to Behave So Your Children Will*, TV Watch has also developed Smart Summer TV tips:

#### **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 raining, 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 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 26 member organizations representing more than 4 million Americans, and more than 1500 grassroots members.

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