

**Parenting Tips
From
COMMUNITY PARENTING SERVICE
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Media Violence and your Child (Part 2)

Leading by example can be effective in teaching children that they do not need to have the television on all the time. Children soon pick up the habit of turning the television on the moment they walk in the door and leaving it on, even just as background noise, for the rest of the evening.

Most parents use television as a babysitter from time to time and it is important to select the programmes they are watching in the same way that it is important to select a reliable and safe baby sitter. Children can feel unsafe when watching violence on television and sometimes do not recognise what the feeling is.

Here are some guidelines you could follow to minimise the effects violence and scary things on television have on your child:-

- Keep televisions out of kid's rooms.
- Decide as a family what programmes will be watched in advance. Try getting the television guide and choosing the programmes once a week and writing them down.
- Teach your child how to plan their own television viewing. Time management is a valuable skill for children to learn and by creating their own schedule to include homework, chores, television time etc helps them develop this skill. You will also be aware of what and when they are planning to watch certain programmes which may need your supervision or disapproval.
- Use the classification system and consumer guidelines. If a programme is rated "PG" the recommendation is that parent's guidance may be needed so take notice of the ratings.
- Encourage your child to describe how television programmes affect him or her. (E.g. sad, happy, scared, angry). It is important for you to help your child understand the reactions they are having and let them know they are normal and healthy reactions.

It's amazing how enjoyable an evening playing charades or a board game can be and children can feel like they have had a special treat after family evening doing something like this. Make sure you turn the telly off first.

We invite you to visit our Centre to 'check out' the wide range of information that we have available for you to browse or borrow