



PBS

# READY TO LEARN: Children And TV Tips for Parents

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## **Select Programs that You and Your Child Watch**

Use a TV guide to plan smart television. Smart television is well suited to the total development of your child. A three-year old is learning very different skills than a six-year old. Be sure to know something about a program before you encourage your children to watch it. Be selective and watch programs that deal with the topics that your children are interested in.

## **Using the VCR**

Tape special programs that your children love and that you feel are good for them to see again. Later you can watch the whole program or just special parts. Viewing a segment of a show may address the very issues that your children want to know something about. Having a program on tape can make it easy to watch short segments again and again.

## **Watch TV Together**

One of the most important actions that you can do to have your children get the most from the TV they watch is to watch TV with them. This allows them to ask you questions and talk about what they see. While watching together, you can learn how much they understand and if there are parts of the program that are unclear to them. Also watching together helps you to point out experiences that are familiar to your child.

## **Encourage Active Viewing**

Children learn from doing, seeing, listening and imitating. Young children learn best through active participation - by talking, playing, dancing, and singing along. The easiest way to encourage your child to join in the activities is for you to do them too. Encourage your children to ask questions, move to the music, and express their feelings to the things they see and hear. Encourage your children's television viewing to be interactive and not a silent experience.

## **Extend the Television Experience to Other Activities**

Do other activities that relate to the theme of the program such as reading books, planting seeds, drawing or painting, or cooking together. Find books that match the topics and ideas of the TV program you watch. Don't hesitate to read the same story again and again. Read aloud each day and encourage your children to look at books on their own.

## **Limit Television Time**

Young children need lots of time to move, talk, play and be with adults and other children. TV is a powerful learning tool but it can't replace hands-on learning or take the place of the care and interactions that children need from you. Parents must be in control of the television viewing in your home.

## **Tips for Teaching with Television**

### **Building on What You Watch**

Play is the child's way of making sense out of the world. The child's active manipulation of objects, his repeated activity with people and things, leads him to make many discoveries about how things work in his environment.

One-way to have children get the most from the TV they are watching is through the Ready To Learn learning triangle of viewing, reading and doing. The learning triangle incorporates the use of video, children's books or other text, and a related activity to reinforce and expand a theme or skill viewed on TV. The learning triangle can follow any order, at any time.