

What Families Should Teach Young Children About Media



1. Real Life and Fantasy

- There is a difference between fantasy, or a make-believe scenario shown on TV and video and computer games, and real life.
- Violence on TV, in movies, or in video and computer games is fantasy and should never be copied by real people.
- Real-life heroes should be people who are looked up to for such qualities as courage, bravery, and doing good things to help others (as opposed to super heroes on TV who fight, destroy, and use deadly force to solve problems).
- Real-life violence hurts the person who gets hurt (e.g., kicked, punched, or hit).
- Real-life violence hurts the person who does the hurting (e.g., gets punished, loses friends, may feel bad after hurting someone).
- Bullets shot on TV shows and in video or computer games are not real. Real bullets kill or hurt people.
- Guns and knives used on TV are not really able to hurt people. Real guns and knives can hurt or kill people.
- Real-life violence hurts the people who watch the violence (e.g., makes them afraid, mad, angry, sad, upset, or confused).

2. Things to Remember

- Children should never touch a gun, bullets, knife, razor, or needle. Make

it clear to children that if they find a weapon, to leave it alone, and tell an adult. They should show the adult right away where it is so that they can take it away and stop someone from getting hurt.

- If children see violence on TV, you should change the channel or go do something else.
- If you are confused, scared, or afraid about something you see on TV, tell an adult about it.
- Don't let what you see on TV make you think that all people of a certain type behave the same way (e.g., men are strong and hurt people, women are weak and don't hurt people. Bad guys wear black clothes, and good guys do not.) This is called "stereotyping."

3. About Violence

- Violence is never the best way to solve a problem; it only creates more problems (i.e., as a result of negative consequences).