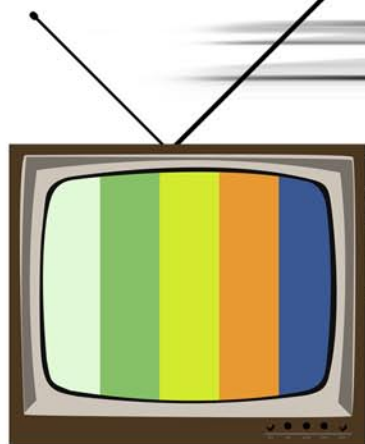


# balancing tv and computer time with play time



**It's okay for your children to watch TV, play video games and use the computer for a small amount of time everyday, but when they spend more than 1 or 2 hours on those activities:**

- They spend less time actively playing and moving their bodies
- They may not do their homework or not do it well
- They may have difficulty paying attention
- They may gain too much weight over time
- They may get confused and not understand the difference between what they see on TV and what is true in the real world
- When they are younger than 3 years old, their brain development may be negatively affected

**ABC AVENUE**



**How much time does your child spend watching TV, playing video games or using the computer every day?**

- less than 1 hour
- between 1 to 2 hours
- between 2 and 4 hours
- more than 4 hours



Children should only spend 1 to 2 hours per day at home watching quality TV, playing video games or using the computer.

Children under 2 years of age should not watch TV at all.

**What can you do to help them spend less time on these activities?**

- Remove the TV set, video games and computer from their bedroom
- Keep the TV off during mealtimes and use these moments to talk to each other instead
- Do not let your children watch TV while doing homework
- Do not leave the TV on all day
- Don't use TV as a reward or punishment. Practices like these make TV seem more important to children
- Help your children get in the habit of turning off the TV right after the program ends
- Encourage your children to be active and do other things such as playing outside, helping with house chores, learning a hobby, playing an instrument, doing art, or reading books
- Set a good example, limit your own time watching TV and choose your programs carefully

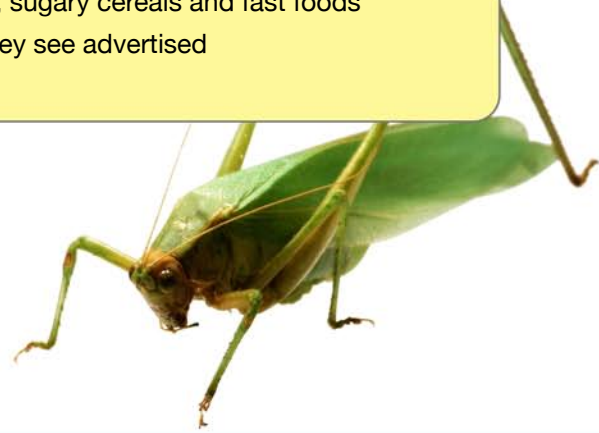
Make sure your children watch educational,  
non-violent programs  
that are appropriate for their age.



**When children watch non-educational programs, they may:**

- see violence, sex and drug abuse
- become too aggressive towards other children
- see the world as a scary and dangerous place
- have frequent nightmares
- see hundreds of commercials for high sugar foods such as candy, soda, fruit drinks, sugary cereals and fast foods
- nag you to buy things they see advertised

WHAT they watch is as important as  
HOW MUCH they watch.



**Check the websites below for good TV programs, videos, DVDs, video games or websites that are suitable for your child's age**

**PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)** - These are local public TV stations that have no commercials. Check their website to get information about programs for you and your child. [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) or <http://pbskids.org/>

**Great Web Sites for Kids** – This site offers more than 700 fun sites for children. <http://www.ala.org/greatsites>

**Coalition for Quality Children's Media** – This organization evaluates and rates children's films, videos, DVDs, audio recordings, software and television programs. <http://www.kidsfirst.org/>

**National Institute for Media and the Family** – A website that rates movies, DVDs, videos, computer games, and TV shows. <http://www.mediafamily.org/>

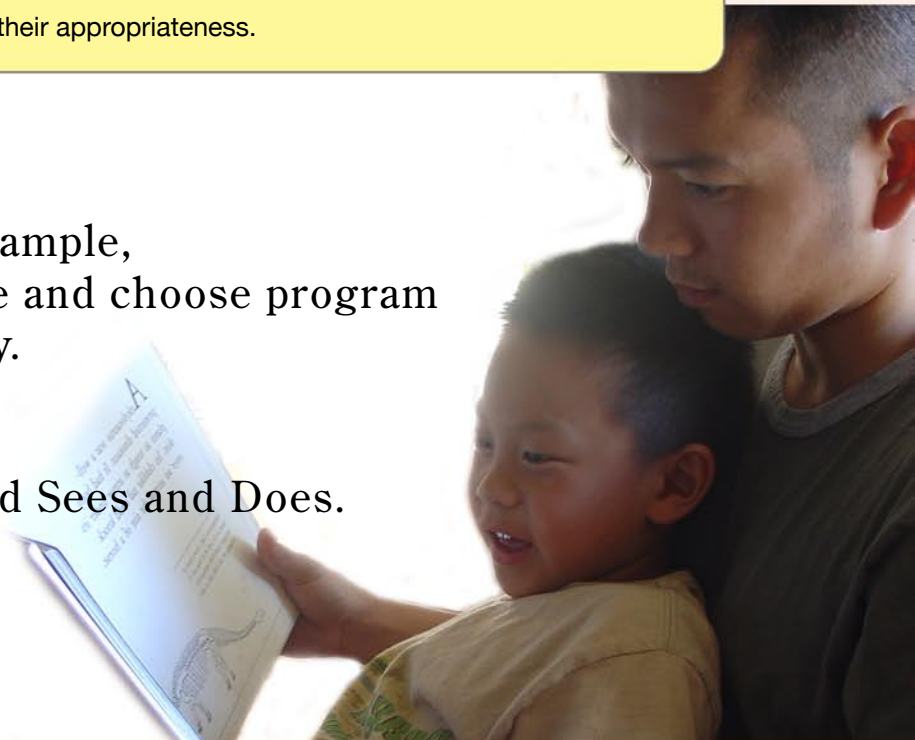
When used carefully,  
TV programs, videotapes and the computer can be positive tools  
to help your children learn.

**What can you do to make sure your children are spending quality time watching TV, videotapes or DVDs and on the computer?**

- Watch TV and videos together. Talk to your children about what they see.
- Pay attention to TV and video ratings. To find a TV rating, you can check your local newspaper listing or the TV Guide. For video ratings, read the package and talk to the people of your local video store.
- Before buying video games for your children, play the game yourself or have someone else demonstrate it for you.
- Look at the websites your children are visiting or the internet games that they are playing. Computer games may not have ratings and therefore parents need to judge their appropriateness.

Set a good example,  
limit your TV/computer time and choose program  
carefully.

What You Do, Your Child Sees and Does.



# talk & listen

to your children

Plan to watch educational TV programs with your children once or twice this week. Use these moments as educational times to help them understand what they are seeing. Talk with them about what they see on these programs. This is also a good time to reinforce your own family values. After the program is over, ask them some questions and make them think about what they saw:

“What did you learn from that program?”

“What did you like about the program?”

“What didn’t you like?”

“Is this one of your favorite programs?”

“What would you tell your friend about this program?”

Use this TV/computer activity log and have your child write down the programs she would like to watch and the activities she would like to do on the computer everyday. Make sure TV and computer time is no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.

## TV/COMPUTER LOG

Days of the Week	Program/Computer/Video Game	Time watched/played
Monday		Total Time:
Tuesday		Total Time:
Wednesday		Total Time:
Thursday		Total Time:
Friday		Total Time:
Saturday		Total Time:
Sunday		Total Time: