



Media Literacy

What Can I Do for My Child?

For Babies to Toddlers (0–2 years)

- It is recommended that children under age 2 should not be exposed to any television.
- If your child does watch TV, watch with him or her. Talk about what is happening.
- Avoid shows that may be frightening to your child. If he or she is scared, offer a toy or physical comfort.

For Toddlers (2–4 years)

- Ask questions about the TV shows your child is watching. Even if they have already seen it many times, they may still be learning. Teach them new words as they answer your questions.
- Watch TV shows that have songs, and sing and dance with your child as you watch.
- Encourage your child to imitate characters when they jump, clap, hop, or perform other skills.
- Avoid TV shows that teach racial, gender, or even age stereotypes.
- Try to have a daily routine so your children know when it is ok to watch TV and when it is time to do other things.
- Children this young have trouble distinguishing fantasy from reality; so avoid shows that may be frightening to your child.
- Allow your child to use his or her imagination. Ask about the TV shows they watch, and let them make up new endings or plot developments.

For Older Children (4–5 years)

- While watching a show, ask your child what he or she thinks will happen next.
- When your child needs quiet time, find other ways for him or her to spend it rather than just watching TV.
- Choose TV shows that teach cause and effect and sequencing or categorizing skills. Practice these skills after you watch the shows.
- Talk to your children about why characters do what they do and whether their actions are right or wrong.