

Protecting Our Children From Media Violence

Experts tell us that children who are exposed to media violence may become:

- More aggressive
- More fearful
- Desensitized to real life violence
- Desire increasing levels of violent entertainment

However, as parents, we can protect our children from the negative impact of media violence by:

1. **Choosing Non-Violent Entertainment** – If you must watch violent television or movies, save them for after your children are securely in bed.
2. **Evaluating Children's Television and Videos** – Don't assume that shows made specifically for children will be free of violence. Instead, preview programs before determining whether they are appropriate for your children.
3. **Talking About What We See** – Watch TV with your children and take the time to discuss with them what they see. In particular, listen for your child's interpretation of any violent acts. Does he or she express fear, confusion, or amusement? Take the opportunity to explore these ideas further and offer comfort and guidance as needed.
4. **Creating a Set of Criteria for Choosing Children's Programming** – Develop a set of guidelines as a family and teach your children to use these guidelines to evaluate the programs they watch.

"Try It" Exercises:

- What qualities are you looking for in your children's television and video entertainment?
- What programs do your children currently watch that you find questionable?
- Would you be willing to watch those shows together this week and evaluate them together as a family?