

Top Ten Tips for Grandparents

Strategies for Healthy TV Viewing

1. **Lead by example.** Set the example: children's viewing patterns often reflect their parents'.
2. **Choose which programmes to watch on TV.** Have the TV set on only when you have specially chosen to watch something.
3. **Tape programmes the family wants to see.** Use a VCR for control and flexibility.
4. **Choose some times when the TV is off.** Plan TV free times during the day.
5. **Choose a family area which is a TV-free space.**
6. **Talk about programmes seen on TV.** Discuss characters, stories and themes. Describe likes and dislikes.
7. **Encourage children to describe how TV affects them.** Talk about how family members feel about certain programmes – happy, scared, excited, worried, angry.
8. **Play 'Spot the Gimmicks and Trickery' in TV commercials.**
9. **Make a list of other things for the family to do.** Take time out to exercise, see friends, eat nutritious food, discover . . .
10. **Find the OFF button and practise using it.**

Further information about YMA services and resources is available from

YOUNG MEDIA AUSTRALIA

PO Box 447
Glenelg 5045 South Australia

Tel: (08) 8376 2111
Fax: (08) 8376 2122

Children and the media: Let's Talk
YMA Helpline: **1800 700 357** (freecall)
E-mail: info@youngmedia.org.au
Web: www.youngmedia.org.au

Young Media Australia (YMA) exists to promote a quality media environment for Australian children and to raise community awareness of the needs of children and young people in relation to print, electronic and screen based media.

Young Media Australia is the trading name of the Australian Council on Children and the Media.

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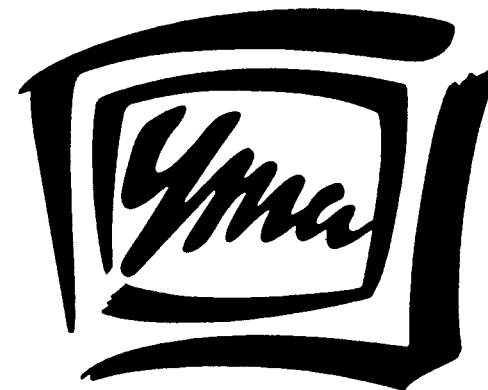
small screen

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Television, videos and grandchildren



*Young Media
Australia*

www.youngmedia.org.au
info@youngmedia.org.au

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Television, videos and grandchildren

Grandparents play an important role in children's lives, and that includes whether their grandchildren are allowed to watch television when at their house, and if so, what they watch. Helping children choose what to watch on TV can be a rewarding experience for child and grandparent.

Australia's media landscape has changed enormously in the past 40 years, with the introduction of television, videos, computer games, pay-TV and the Internet.

Many people have mixed feelings about the proliferation of media in the lives of today's children.

On one hand, the wider range of choices, and the educational, informative and entertainment value of some programs, can greatly benefit children.

On the other hand, there are concerns and questions about the impact of so much media, and certain aspects of it such as violence and advertising, on children's growth and development.

Television can give children access to the global village to help them better understand the world they live in; quality children's TV can enhance children's development by providing positive role models of co-operation and collaboration as a responsible way of acting in the world; and TV can stimulate discussion, when watched together by adults and children, which in turn can help a child develop a critical perspective of what they see on TV.

Children want to understand the world in which they live. When parents or other adults use a mediation style to discuss the content of programmes, they can clarify difficult concepts, and explain the differences between fantasy and reality.

Television – like films, videos, computer games and other children's media – is not 'mindless entertainment'. It is highly influential.

There are a range of strategies parents, grandparents and other carers can use to help guide children's viewing and to help ensure children are protected from harm (see *Top Ten Tips for Grandparents* in this brochure).

The emphasis at all times should be on communication – with the child, and with the child's parents or guardians. Even if it appears a child is given 'free rein' over the amount and types of programs watched at home, it is entirely proper for grandparents to have their own 'house rules' about viewing patterns, and to exercise them.

And of course, there are a number of alternatives to free-to-air television programmes if activities away from the small screen are not possible (see *Alternatives to Television* in this brochure).

ask us, we can help

Young Media Australia has 40 years experience in initiating and collecting research on the social impact of the mass media on young people.

The media can and should be a positive influence in our lives – we all need to learn to discriminate, and to share the heavy responsibility of what our children see, read and hear.

The experience, resources and energies of Young Media Australia generate greater awareness and understanding of the power of the screen over our children and adolescents.

The right of the child to a balanced and healthy entertainment and information base should be paramount.

deciding what to watch

- Use *Top Ten Tips for Grandparents: Strategies for Healthy TV Viewing*
- Choose programmes appropriate for the child's age and level of development
- Use the classifications P (for Pre-school), C (Children's), and G (General) to help decide what to watch
- Discuss programme content with children
- Turn off the TV and talk if you disagree



alternatives to television

- Use the VCR to record specific programmes
- Hire a video
- Consider using pay-TV
- Build up a 'grandparent's choice' set of videos
- Consult *The Children's Guide to Adelaide* (Janet Woollatt) or similar books at your local library