




Pulling the Plug on Media Violence

Facts and Tips for Parents





Media violence can, and does, lead to real life violence. It's not just about the programs your child is watching on TV. It is also about the interactive games being played on the TV in your home and the portable electronic devices that your child uses to play and watch video games.

FACT Did you know that television and video games teach your child about violence? As adults, we know that real violence causes pain, sadness, and sometimes death, but TV and game violence is often painless, and sometimes funny.

FACT TV characters often use violence to solve problems. Video games allow children to practice violence. Children need to learn and practice how to solve problems in a non-violent way.

FACT Just as children learn from parents, siblings, and peers, they also learn from their heroes — both good and bad habits. According to experts in the field, children can:

- ▶ Learn that violence is okay by watching TV
- ▶ Learn from video games that killing leads to winning
- ▶ Learn that violence is fun to watch and pretend, and as a result, encourage each other to fight

Limiting Violence

TIP Limit your child's screen time to 2 hours a day or less. Watching too much violence can lead to increasingly aggressive behavior.

TIP Know what your child is watching and how your child is using electronic entertainment. Help your child choose non-violent games and programs.

TIP Don't put a TV in your child's room. You won't know what programs your child is watching or how much time is spent in front of the TV.

TIP Limit the use of portable electronic devices.

TIP When you're watching a program that has violence or playing a violent video game, don't allow your child to join you.

TIP Talk about media violence with your child and ask:

- Was that real or pretend?
- Was that the way to solve a problem?
- What would happen if you did that?

TIP Tell your child how you feel about violence, and that real violence is painful and makes people sad and angry. You can also use these tips to discuss bullying, sexual or racial stereotyping, and good citizenship.

TIP Find helpful resources regarding television and gaming violence on the Web. These may include:

- [www.common sense media.org/
videos/impact-tv-violence](http://www.common sense media.org/videos/impact-tv-violence)
- www.tvguidelines.org
- www.parentstv.org

For additional copies:

Massachusetts Medical Society
Public Health and Education
860 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451-1411

www.massmed.org/violence

(800) 322-2303, x7373

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