

We all know that TV is an important source of information for young people.

By watching shows that their children watch, parents will find new ways to reach out and communicate with their children on issues like sexuality, violence, and drugs. They will learn what amuses their children as well as what distresses them.

In the end, watching – and talking – together will become more important than what they watch!

TV Talk Tips for Parents and CAREGIVERS

1. **Watch what your children watch.** Do this as often as you can. Also, review TV listings and suggest shows that you would like to watch with them.
2. **Watch the first time without offering any opinions.** Sit back, relax, and take in what you see and hear. You'll learn what your children like.
3. **Ask your child's opinion.** "How do you feel about...?" "What do you think...?" You have begun to nurture the thinking skills that will help your children question media messages.
4. **Share your opinions in a positive way.** Discuss your beliefs. Avoid lectures or criticism. Your children need to understand your values as they begin to form their own.
5. **Watch for "teachable moments."** Use the opportunity of a joke or a tender scene to discuss a subject.
6. **Use commercial time to talk.** Take this time to communicate your own brief message. Your children may pay more attention during a break in the show.
7. **Remember that "bad" shows can provoke discussions, too.** They will often give you the opportunity to discuss the behaviour of a certain character.
8. **Be sensitive.** Your children might find it embarrassing for you to discuss sexuality issues in front of their friends or other adults. Find an appropriate time.
9. **Use keys to good communication.** As you're talking, encourage give and take. Use such phrases as "What do you think?" "That's a good question." "I don't know, but I'll find out." "I'm glad you told me about that."
10. **Have fun!** Keep the conversation informal. It's okay to laugh.

Adapted from *Families Are Talking*, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States.

*If you would like more information on communicating with your child(ren)
about the media and internet use, visit these web-sites:*

www.mediawatchyouth.ca

www.getnetwise.org

www.childrenspartnership.org
