

Core Educational Programming Evaluation of the Local DFW Stations Overview

In 1990, Congress enacted the Children's Television Act (CTA) to increase the amount of educational and informational programming available on television. CTA requires each broadcast television station in the United States to serve the educational and informational needs of children through its overall programming, including programming specifically designed to serve these needs ("core programming"). It also limits the amount of time broadcasters may devote to commercial matter during children's programs.¹

We are pleased that the Children's Television Act exists, however we are very concerned that each network affiliate is responsible to decide what constitutes appropriate core content. The FCC requires stations to file a list of core programming, but the FCC does not approve or disapprove of each station's choice of core educational programming. This is like the fox guarding the henhouse so to speak.

The DFW Chapter of the Parents Television Council leadership team will evaluate the current programs offered as core programming for children by the following stations: KDFW – FOX affiliate channel 4; KXAS - NBC affiliate channel 5; WFAA – ABC affiliate channel 8; and KTVT – CBS affiliate channel 11. We will watch and evaluate each show submitted as core programming on each of these stations. We will give each show a grade of A,B,C,D, or F based on the following five areas:

- Educational Value
- Moral Value
- Relevance and Appeal
- Parental Value
- Advertising and Marketing

Our goals in completing this evaluation are:

- To educate parents in the DFW area on core content programming.
- To ensure that local broadcast stations are following the guidelines of the Children's Television Act.
- To work with local broadcast stations to improve core content programming for children.

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DFW Stations Overview Cont.

Core Programming:

"Core Programming" is programming specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children ages 16 and under. To satisfy the "core programming" definition, a program must also be:

- a regularly scheduled weekly program,
- at least 30 minutes in length,
- aired between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- identified as Core Educational Programming by use of a logo or announcement at the beginning of the program,

The FCC's rules limit the amount of commercials which may be aired during core children's programming to **10.5 minutes per hour on weekends** and **12 minutes per hour on weekdays**. These limitations are prorated for programs that are shorter than one hour in duration.²

What is host- selling?

The FCC's rules prohibit "host-selling" which is any character endorsement that has the effect of confusing a child viewer from distinguishing between program and non-program material. In other words using the same characters in commercial advertisements that appear in the immediately adjacent children's program is considered host-selling.² For example the character "Dora" could not be used to market any products immediately before, during or after the program "Dora the Explorer."

Sources:

¹ <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/childtv.html>

² <http://www.fcc.gov/parents/commercials.html>