

What Are Your Children Watching?



Rating the Top 20 Most Popular Prime-Time Broadcast TV Shows Watched by Children Ages 2-17

OCTOBER 2007

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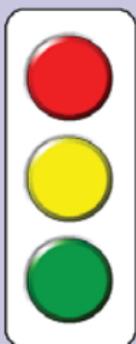
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RED: Show may include gratuitous sex, explicit dialogue, violent content, or obscene language, and is unsuitable for children.

YELLOW: The show contains adult-oriented themes and dialogue that may be inappropriate for youngsters.

GREEN: Family-friendly show promoting responsible themes and traditional values.

**For a more detailed ratings description visit:
www.parentstv.org/PTC/familyguide/Ratings.asp
(WARNING! Graphic descriptions are used.)**

What Are Your Children Watching?

Rating the Top 20 Most Popular Prime-Time Broadcast TV Shows Watched by Children Ages 2-17

2006-2007

PARENTS TELEVISION COUNCIL

Not all children ages 2-17 watch age-appropriate programs, according to Nielsen Media Research. Television shows that might sound innocent enough, such as *Family Guy* or *American Dad*, push the limits of decency with sexual innuendo and adult themes. On the other hand, children also flock to TV shows with positive values, like *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* and *American Idol*. Using its traffic-light ratings system, the Parents Television Council analyzed the twenty most popular prime-time broadcast shows among children ages 2-17, ranking the programs according to their suitability for young viewers.

Each series was rated as suitable, questionably suitable, or unsuitable for young audiences, and then ranked from best to worst. It is interesting to note that every series on the "Most Suitable" list, and all but one of the series on the "Questionably Suitable" list are reality or game shows. See page 2-3 for PTC's ranking. The remainder of the report shows where each show ranks in popularity with young viewers according to Nielsen Media Research.

PTC ratings are based on an objective quantitative and qualitative analysis of the frequency and explicitness of foul language, sexual content, and violence present in each series. The PTC also takes into consideration time slot, target audience, themes and plotlines of each program it rates.

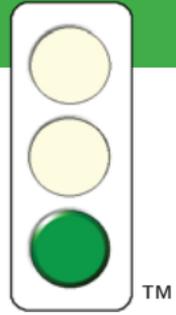
The message of this report is simple: parents must be informed when it comes to monitoring what their children watch on television. That's why the Parents Television Council produces these important studies: to provide families with critical information on television content so that they can make the appropriate decisions.

PTC Ranking of the Best and Worst Pr

Most Suitable

(BEST TO WORST)

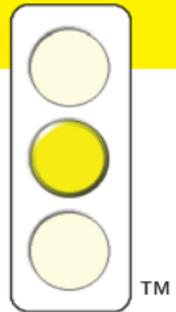
- 1) *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*
ABC/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays
- 2) *NBC Sunday Night Football*
NBC/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays
- 3) *Deal or No Deal*
NBC/8:00 p.m. ET
Wednesdays and Fridays
- 4) *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?*
Fox/8:00 p.m. ET Thursdays
- 5) *The Singing Bee*
NBC/8:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays
- 6) *Don't Forget the Lyrics*
Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays
- 7) *American Idol*
Fox/Returning Spring '08
- 8) *Supernanny*
ABC/9:00 p.m. ET Mondays



Questionably Suitable

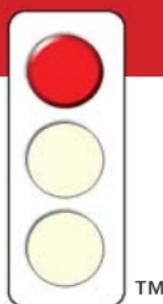
(BEST TO WORST)

- 9) *America's Funniest Home Videos*
ABC/7:00 p.m. ET Sundays
- 10) *Dancing with the Stars*
ABC/8:00 p.m. ET Mondays,
9:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays
- 11) *So You Think You Can Dance*
Fox/Returning Spring '08
- 12) *Amazing Race*
CBS/Returning Spring '08
- 13) *Survivor*
CBS/8:00 p.m. ET Thursdays
- 14) *The Simpsons*
Fox/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays



Prime-Time Shows Watched by Children

Not Suitable



(BEST TO WORST)

- 15) *House*
Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays
- 16) *Grey's Anatomy*
ABC/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays
- 17) *Heroes*
NBC/9:00 p.m. ET Mondays
- 18) *C.S.I.*
CBS/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays
- 19) *American Dad*
Fox/9:30 p.m. ET Sundays
- 20) *Family Guy*
Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Sundays



The following pages contain a listing based on a Nielsen ranking of prime-time broadcast programs most watched by children between the ages of 2-17 for the 2006-2007 television season. Only recurring or series programs returning in the 2007-2008 season were included. Each series has been evaluated for its appropriateness for children under the age of 18 based on a comprehensive review of the content on each of these programs.

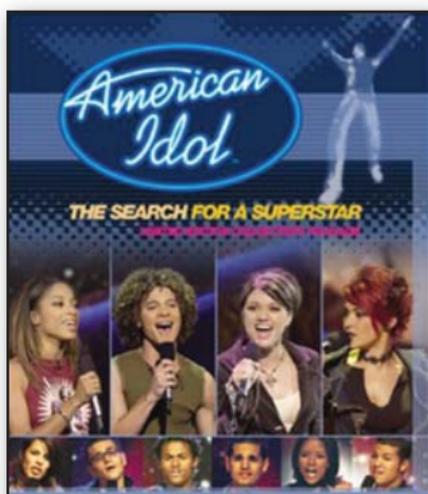
#1



AMERICAN IDOL: THE SEARCH FOR A SUPERSTAR

Returning Spring '08

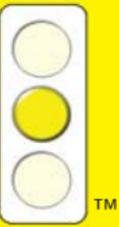
With television audiences becoming increasingly fragmented, *American Idol: The Search for a Superstar* has done what conventional Hollywood wisdom has declared to be impossible: it has united families in front of the television set and proven that wholesome, family-friendly entertainment can be wildly successful. Consistently the highest-rated show on television, this talent competition has



given hundreds of young men and women a shot at becoming America's next singing sensation.

While some viewers may find producer Simon Cowell's harsh and often blunt commentary

unappealing, *American Idol* is an entertaining show that the entire family can enjoy. *Idol* doesn't have a moral or a message, but it can be appreciated for what it is: a talent competition, pure and simple. This reality series doesn't focus on backstabbing or betrayal, and it doesn't follow the contestants' bedroom shenanigans. What it does focus on is the surprisingly good performances turned in by the talented young singers.



#2

SURVIVOR

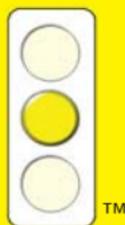
CBS/8:00 p.m. ET Thursdays

Survivor helped usher in the era of reality TV. In it, contestants are left to fend for themselves in a secluded and remote location. With only the clothes on their backs and one luxury item each, they must struggle not only to survive, but to stay in the competition. Each week one contestant is voted “off the island” by his fellow contestants. The last one standing wins the million dollar prize and the title of “Sole Survivor.”

Content on *Survivor* can be somewhat unpredictable. Some seasons are very clean, other seasons less so. During one episode, two female contestants stripped naked during a challenge in exchange for chocolate cookies and peanut butter. Although the nudity was pixelated, it was captured on tape and broadcast into millions of homes. In other seasons, contestants have been involved in sexual situations – inviting TV audiences to become voyeurs. In addition, some episodes have contained graphic scenes of violence or bodily harm, as when a contestant passed out and collapsed into a bonfire, badly burning both his hands.



#3

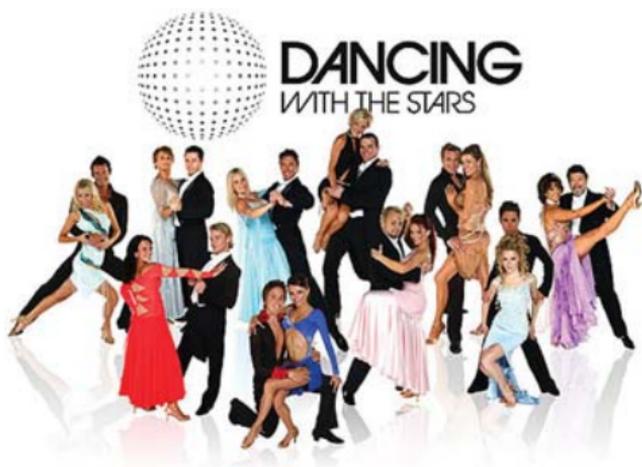


DANCING WITH THE STARS

ABC/8:00 p.m. ET Mondays,
9:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays

Who would have thought a ballroom dancing competition would be a ratings success and one of the most popular programs with young audiences? This surprise hit, which pairs celebrities with professional dancers, has earned a permanent spot on ABC's prime-time schedule and has made America fall in love with ballroom dancing.

At the beginning of each episode the hosts explain the type of dances to be performed and the criteria the judges will use to determine the winner. As the stars perform, the viewer sees the featured dance steps in action and gains an understanding of an art and entertainment form largely overlooked by American popular culture in the 21st century. *Dancing with the Stars* is an elegant program that the whole family can gather around the television to watch.





#4

EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION

ABC/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition may be the most family-friendly series on television and is an excellent example of a constructive and uplifting reality TV show. Unlike other reality series that emphasize and exploit contestants' worst qualities (greed, dishonesty, vanity, etc.), this inspiring program showcases charity and selflessness.

Each week, carpenter Ty Pennington and a crew of designers, contractors, and workmen completely



renovate the home of a deserving family. Featured families are often chosen because of health conditions or special needs that make their current homes unsuitable. Besides highlighting the good works for families in need, the program also features local companies that often donate funds to establish scholarships for the young children in these struggling families, ensuring they have a chance at a better future. This series is a breath of fresh air and a television rarity.

#5



ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 5th GRADER?

Fox/8:00 p.m. ET Thursdays

In the past two years, game shows have become a hot TV trend. The resurgence of the TV game show has had an added side benefit for families – they reliably provide inoffensive, family-friendly entertainment. A sterling example of this is Fox's hit game show, *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* Hosted by Jeff Foxworthy, *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* tests adults' knowledge and memory of elementary textbook trivia by having them compete against a panel of fifth graders for cash prizes that can add up to a million dollars.

Competitors who don't know the answer to the question can "cheat" by "peeking," "copying," and finally, "dropping out." While these are certainly not behaviors any parent would want their child to imitate, it is nothing more than school-themed lingo for commonly-used game show lifelines, not suggestions for how to get ahead in school.



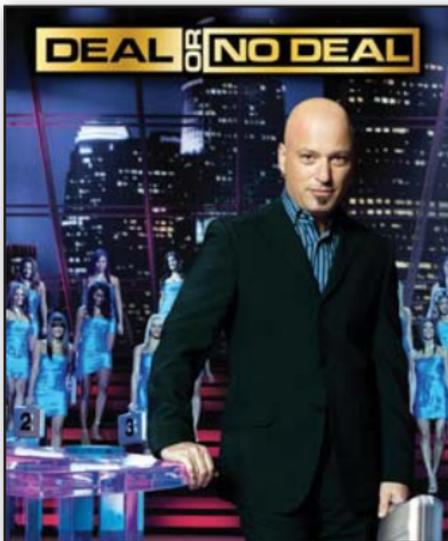


#6

DEAL OR NO DEAL

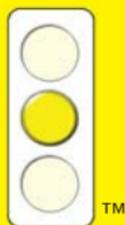
NBC/8:00 p.m. ET Wednesdays and Fridays

ABC revived the prime-time game show in the late '90s with *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* and reaped the rewards with blockbuster ratings. NBC has experienced similar ratings resurgence with this hit game show hosted by comedian Howie Mandel. *Deal or No Deal* is a game of odds in which contestants play for a top prize of \$1 million. The contestants are allowed to bring several people to aid them in making decisions. Often they are spouses, friends or siblings, and the significance of the



person's relationship to the contestant is emphasized.

Completely devoid of sex and violence *Deal or No Deal* is an entertaining program the whole family can enjoy.



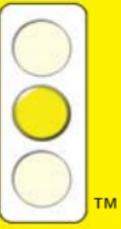
AMERICA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS

ABC/7:00 p.m. ET Sundays

As the name suggests, *America's Funniest Home Videos* features humorous footage from home videos submitted by viewers from across the country. The videos are shown and then voted on by the studio audience to determine which of the video submissions is the funniest. Most of the videos are harmless, some are even disarmingly charming; but there is unquestionably an undercurrent of *schadenfreude* that many people find unsettling, with many of the videos showing people in painfully



embarrassing situations, getting hit in the groin, or getting hurt while attempting a stunt.



#8

THE SIMPSONS

Fox/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays

Now in its 19th season, *The Simpsons* is the longest running comedy series in U.S. TV history save for *Saturday Night Live*. It has beaten the previous record holder for the longest-running prime-time animated series (*The Flintstones*) by more than ten years. *The Simpsons* hasn't changed much over the years. In the beginning critics complained about the irreverent humor, the bumbling father figure and disrespectful attitudes displayed by the children – those elements are still present, and still problematic. On the plus side, the series depicts a loving, if somewhat dysfunctional, family and episodes often contain a moral or a message.

The Simpsons frequently contains cartoon violence, and occasionally employs mild profanities and sexual innuendo. Such content isn't frequent, but is notable when it occurs. In the 2005 season premiere, for example, Homer allows the mafia to film a pornographic movie in the Simpson home.

There are no graphic depictions of sex in the scene, but there is talk of lesbian pornography.





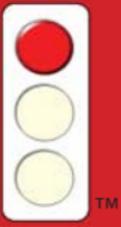
FAMILY GUY

Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Sundays

Family Guy is a raunchy animated series about a blue-collar New England family and is utterly lacking in any redeeming qualities.

Although the show is intended to be a satire of the American family, it spends most of its time pushing the limits of decency with heavy sexual innuendo and sexual themes. In one episode, Peter calls his wife a “foul, venereal-disease-carrying, street-walking, whore” during sex. In another, Peter behaves as if he has been raped after getting a prostate exam. In yet another episode the school principal is seen receiving a massage which results in an implied orgasm. Cartoon nudity is common and violence, though animated, is frequent and often brutal. Episodes also frequently employ foul language. Parents of young children are especially cautioned because *Family Guy*'s animated format is sure to make it attractive to young viewers.





#10

HOUSE

Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays

Dr. Gregory House is an unconventional physician and an undisputed genius. He is an infectious disease specialist capable of solving the cases that no one else can. His amazing diagnostic skills are also complemented with an astonishing perception of human nature. With just a quick glimpse at a patient, he knows whether he is hiding something, lying, or if the condition is merely psychosomatic. Dr. House is a genius but also a misanthropic eccentric inept at personal relationships. He's has been in severe pain for years because of a leg injury and has become addicted to pain-killers.

House is not particularly violent, although some scenes depicting surgical procedures might be too graphic for young viewers. Several episodes have contained sexual content. In one episode, for example, a young man falls ill during sex and explicit dialogue about the possibilities of dying as a result of kinky sex followed. In another, a teenage model suffering from a mysterious condition claims to have seduced her father and manager. Doctors later discover that she is a hermaphrodite with testicular cancer. In yet another, an elderly woman starts showing the recurrent symptoms of syphilis, which involve an abnormally increased libido. Language can also be raw.



#11



THE SINGING BEE

NBC/8:00 p.m. ET Tuesdays

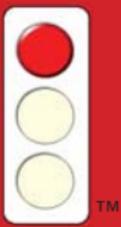
The Singing Bee was an outgrowth of the TV game show juggernaut that dominated the 2006-2007 television season, and the program became an instant hit. *The Singing Bee* is a true rarity on prime-time television: a positive, upbeat, fast-paced, family-friendly show that appeals to multiple generations.

Hosted by former `NSync member Joey Fatone, *The Singing Bee* challenges contestants' knowledge of popular song lyrics.



Several small competitions weed out contestants until the last contestant standing plays for \$50,000.

Viewers at home can enjoy testing their own recall of popular song lyrics, and parents need not worry about inadvertently exposing their children to inappropriate content.



#12

AMERICAN DAD

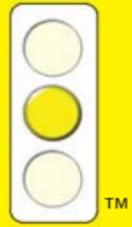
Fox/9:30 p.m. ET Sundays

American Dad is the brainchild of Seth MacFarlane, who also brought us the ultra-raunchy cartoon series *Family Guy*. *American Dad* follows Stan, a conservative CIA agent devoted to his country and his work above anything else, even his own family. Francine is his trophy housewife, and his children are Hayley, the rebellious daughter and Steve, the geeky son who has no scruples whatsoever. The family also has Helmut, a lascivious German talking fish, and an androgynous alien from the outer space named Roger.

The show intends to be as irreverent as the *Family Guy* targeting American values and institutions. Stanley Smith's national sentiment is portrayed as mere jingoism, making him look like the ultimate ugly white male American. The humor consists of scatology and crude sexual innuendo. Violence is mostly comedic but can be quite graphic at times and often includes guns and fight sequences. Language is often coarse.



#13

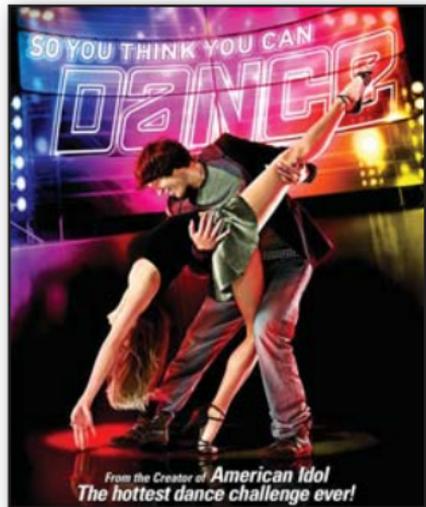


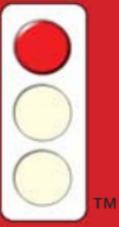
SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE

Fox/Returning Spring '08

So You Think You Can Dance gives twenty dancers a shot at dancing in a Las Vegas show. Versatility is the key to success in this competition as dancers learn to perform a range of dance styles ranging from Hip Hop and Jazz to Modern and Ballroom. Each week one male and one female dancer is eliminated from the competition.

The choreographers explain techniques and influences to the contestants and the audience, helping to cultivate understanding and appreciation for the various dances. Some of the dances, particularly Hip Hop, can contain suggestive moves. After the mass auditions end, the amount of questionable language greatly diminishes, as does any sexual innuendo. The judges offer support and constructive criticism to the contestants.





#14

HEROES

NBC/9:00 p.m. ET Mondays

Heroes is a sci-fi drama about several ordinary people who gradually discover that they have super-human abilities. Each episode reveals a piece of the puzzle that explains how they got their powers and how they will use them together to save the world.

Don't be fooled by the title of the show, however. These are not your archetypal comic book heroes who fight for truth, justice and the American Way. One "hero," Niki Sanders, is a single mother living in Las Vegas who provides for her son by stripping on her internet porn site. Her alter ego randomly takes over her mind and body and is capable of committing unspeakable acts of violence and sexual deviance. Because of the comic-book aspect and unquestionable appeal of its young cast, this series will be especially attractive to adolescent and pre-adolescent viewers, which is especially troubling given the brutal, graphic and disturbing violence present in every episode, rather explicit sexual content, and harsh foul language.



#15



NBC SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

NBC/8:00 p.m. ET Sundays

The lack of child-appropriate programming on television can be confounding for parents. Fortunately, sports are usually a safe alternative, and in the fall, that means football. As an added advantage, children – young boys in particular – love to watch sports and watching with your child can present opportunities to



talk about good sportsmanship, leadership, and teamwork. All in all, it's not a bad way to spend a Sunday evening.

Parents really don't have to worry about content during the games – but increasingly the ads during the games are a becoming a major concern with ads for male enhancement, beer and adult-oriented prime-time dramas occupying prime ad space.



#16

GREY'S ANATOMY

ABC/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays

Dr. Meredith Grey is TV's latest angst-filled heroine, *Ally McBeal* in scrubs. The night before starting work as a surgical intern at Seattle Grace hospital, she had a one-night stand with a man who turns out to be her married boss, Dr. Derek Shepherd. She is also floored by the discovery that her mother, a famous, pioneering surgeon whose brilliant mind has been ravaged by Alzheimer's, had a long-term affair with the Chief of Surgery at Seattle Grace. Her friends and fellow interns have equally complicated love lives.

The sexual content is not explicit, but is pervasive – especially the recurrent theme of infidelity. As the show is based in a hospital, a fair number of medical procedures are shown in great detail, with blood, open wounds and surgery being a part of the storyline. Foul language is also a frequent problem.



#17



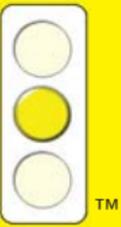
DON'T FORGET THE LYRICS

Fox/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays

Like NBC's *The Singing Bee*, *Don't Forget the Lyrics* is another popular TV game show that tests contestants' knowledge of popular song lyrics. Hosted by the affable and talented Wayne Brady, contestants choose a genre of pop music (disco, classic rock, pop, '80s...) and perform songs from that genre karaoke-style until the lyrics are cut out and the contestants are forced to finish the verse from memory to advance in the game.

The songs are all radio-friendly and tastefully chosen. Adults will enjoy listening to the songs they grew up with and seeing if they can recall the correct lyrics while children will enjoy hearing ordinary people attempting to perform the songs they think they know.





#18

THE AMAZING RACE

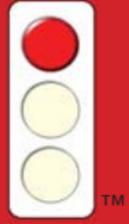
CBS/Returning Spring '08

Amazing Race returns with teams of two competing around the world. Each team works together to race through various tasks and each round ends in a pit stop, where the last team to arrive is either eliminated from the game or stripped of all their luggage and money for the next leg of the race. Teams participating include dating couples, married couples, pairs of friends, and siblings. The team who wins the last round will receive a \$1,000,000 prize

There is a great deal of foul language used by most of the contestants, including "ass," "bitch," euphemisms for the "f-word," "crap," "suck," "damn," "screw," and "hell." Even more disturbing than the use of these words is the behavior of the teams in general. Often the teams fight amongst themselves, bicker and even call each other names. They often make up less-than flattering nicknames for rival teams or act sneaky to get an advantage over them. Sex and violence are not an issue for this series.



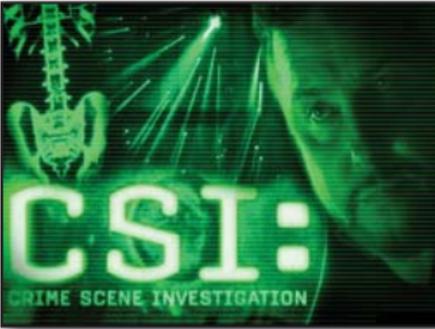
#19



C.S.I.

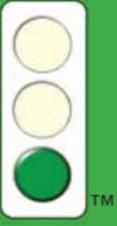
CBS/9:00 p.m. ET Thursdays

A series about crime scene investigators is bound to deal with some distasteful subjects. But this series isn't just about the science behind forensic investigations – the process of finding and identifying fingerprints and DNA or matching bullets to the guns that discharged them; *C.S.I.* takes it a step further by providing graphic depictions of decaying bodies, grisly crime scenes, dissections, and flashbacks of brutal rapes and murders. Such content would be bad enough at 10:00 p.m., but this series airs at 9:00 (8:00 in the Central and Mountain time zones), with reruns often airing during the Family Hour.



With each passing season, the storylines become more outrageous and horrifying. Every possible sexual

deviancy and kinky fetish has been explored. In addition to close-ups of corpses, young viewers have been witnesses to cannibalism, scenes of a brother and sister having sex, men receiving S&M beatings from a dominatrix in a sex club, a woman making a sex video for her 15-year-old stepson, a wife-swapping sex party, a case at a mental hospital that revealed a twisted relationship of mother-son incest, a man dying from autoerotic asphyxiation and a plot involving a special Las Vegas luxury “party bus” in which men were entertained by strippers. Clearly none of this content is appropriate for children, and yet millions tune in, week after week.



#20

SUPERNANNY

ABC/9:00 p.m. ET Mondays

Supernanny follows Jo Frost, an experienced nanny, as she visits families in desperate need of professional child-rearing advice and assistance. She observes the family in their day-to-day activities and then shows the parents how to use practical techniques to discipline and nurture their children. Such techniques include coming down to a child's level to talk with or discipline them and implementing the use of a "naughty chair/stool/room" when the child misbehaves.

Overall, this show provides an hour of clean entertainment, though in some episodes the child's misbehavior includes foul language and aggressive behavior. Though not strong enough to classify as "violence," in several episodes the children have had issues with being aggressive either towards their siblings or other playmates. This has included hitting and spitting and other bad behavior. These acts of misbehavior are disciplined and by the end of the show, the children are responsive to their parents and are fairly well-behaved. Most episodes are clean,



funny and enjoyable for the whole family, but may not always be appropriate for children under the age of ten, particularly if there is a chance children will mimic the bad behavior exhibited the children on the program.

PTC Entertainment Tracking System: State-of-the Art Television Monitoring System

The PTC's ability to scientifically track broadcast and selected cable network programs for sex, violence, and profanity is directly attributable to its state-of-the-art monitoring system, ETS. Conceived and designed by the PTC, ETS, or Entertainment Tracking System, allows the Parents Television Council to monitor every instance of sex, violence and profanity in network programs, and in many cable shows.

This research allows the organization to produce important studies such as *The Alarming Family Hour*, *No Place for Children: A Content Analysis of Sex, Foul Language and Violence During Network Television's Family Hour*; *Dying to Entertain: Violence on Prime-Time Broadcast Television*; and *The Ratings Sham: TV Executives Hiding Behind a System That Doesn't Work*.

Here's how it works: Every evening PTC VCRs record every prime-time series on ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, the CW, Ion, and MyNetworkTV, as well as original programming on basic cable, including MTV. The following day, the PTC's entertainment analysts don their headsets, turn on their computers, grab their remote controls and set about the arduous work of transcribing every offensive word, every instance of sexual innuendo and every act of violence in detail. These reports are fed into the PTC's custom-designed computer program.

The PTC is able to generate reports from the information collected by ETS. These reports form the basis of the organization's comprehensive studies, e-mail alerts, television recommendations and newsletters. ETS reports are provided to the Federal Communications Commission and other federal regulatory agencies, as they are the most reliable analysis of television programming available. Even the television networks do not have as comprehensive a resource as ETS.

Today the PTC programming archive consists of more than 110,000 hours of programming on nearly 17,000 video tapes. There is no other organization in the world that has this comprehensive library of television content analysis.

The organization will soon transfer all current videotaped programming to digital. This is a major undertaking requiring staff time and significant monetary resources. But as the repository of the most comprehensive archive of television programming, it's a responsibility the PTC sees as important. ETS is just one of the powerful tools that the PTC uses to affect positive change in the quality of television broadcasting.

PARENTS TELEVISION COUNCIL™

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Parents Television Council

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**The Parents Television Council (PTC)
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advocacy organization protecting
children against sex, violence,
and profanity on television and
in other media because of their
documented and long-term harmful
effects. Founded in 1995 to stem
the dramatic rise in indecent
programming, the PTC today
has become one of the strongest
watchdog organizations of the
entertainment industry.**

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