

## Restoring Decency in Entertainment

Because of the pervasive and powerful influence of television, the Parents Television and Media Council (PTC) seeks to discourage the increasingly graphic sexual themes, depictions of gratuitous violence, and profane language that have crowded out family viewing options. We promote positive family-oriented programming while assisting parents in protecting the hearts and minds of their children. Together, we can change the media culture and make the world safer for our children.



## Parents Television and Media Council Mission and Vision

The Parents Television and Media Council (PTC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan research and education organization advocating responsible entertainment.

The **mission** of PTC is to protect children and families from graphic sex, violence, and profanity in the media because of their proven, long-term harmful effects.

The **vision** of the Parents Television and Media Council is to provide a safe and sound entertainment media environment for children and families across America.

Parents Television and Media Council

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# 8 STEPS to Protect Your Children from Inappropriate Entertainment



*Because Our Children  
Are Watching*

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## **1** When it comes to kids and smartphones . . . *Delay, Delay, Delay.*

There's so much pressure to get kids on screens, tablets, phones, and computers at younger and younger ages, but you are still the parent, and you get to decide if and when you allow your child to have a smartphone. If communication is a concern because of busy schedules and after-school activities, make sure you know the adults in charge and that they know how to reach you in case of an emergency or change of plans.

## **2** Limit the number of screens and devices in the home and set boundaries around when and where they can be used.

It's important to have well-defined boundaries around the use of technology in the home and away from home. No devices, computers, or TVs in bedrooms, only in common areas of the house, and no phones at meal times. If your child brings friends over, the phones go into a basket by the front door until they leave. Keep a charging station in your own bedroom and make sure all phones are turned in at night before bedtime.

## **3** Carefully review content and parental controls on any new streaming platform you are considering adding to your smart TV or OTT device.

Not all streaming platforms are equally suitable for children and families. Some

have more adult content than others. Some have stronger parental controls than others. If you subscribe to any platform that offers TV-MA rated content, make sure you set up a separate account for the children in your home and that pin-codes or passwords are in place to restrict their access to adult content. PTC has resources to help you with this.

## **4** Watch together whenever possible. And plan in advance what you're going to watch.

Planning is essential. Do your research. Find out what the show is about and what you can expect before you sit down to watch. Read reviews and search the Parents Television and Media Council's "Family Guide" for information about the volume and degree of sexual content, violence, or profanity in the program.

## **5** Pay attention to the ratings. But don't assume that because a show is rated PG, it's okay for your family.

Not sure what a TV-14 rating means? Ratings aren't what they used to be, and parents have to be careful. If a program is rated TV-MA, trust that it's rated that way for a reason, and look for an alternative. That said, parents can often be caught off guard by adult content found on TV-PG rated shows. A recent PTC study found 10.8 instances of adult content per hour on PG-rated shows. Consider using a filtering

service as a backstop to make sure nothing slips past you.

## **6** Be an active viewer.

Even if you've done your research, you may still be caught off guard by inappropriate content within the program or in a commercial. Make sure you've got the remote in hand so you can skip over the content or quickly change the channel, and use that opportunity to talk to your child about what they saw and why you felt it was inappropriate.

## **7** Talk about what you saw.

This is especially true if you have school-aged children. You can use lessons learned on the TV show to have meaningful discussions about issues that are relevant to their lives in a way they can relate to and understand.

## **8** But don't turn it into a lecture.

When kids feel a lecture coming on, they often shut down and tune out, especially if they feel like you are hypocritical about screen time. Instead, use organic opportunities to share your values, to model appropriate screen use, and to find ways to share time together that doesn't involve screens. Look for opportunities to get outdoors, read aloud together, or play a game as a family. These will do far more to foster connection and keep your kids away from harmful media content than all the rules and parental controls in the world.