

The Parents Television Council is the nation's most influential advocacy organization protecting children from sex, violence, and profanity in entertainment. Founded in 1995 to stem the dramatic rise in indecent and violent programming, the PTC today has become one of the strongest watchdog organizations of the entertainment industry.

The Parents Television Council (PTC) is recognized under Federal tax code as a 501 (c)(3) public charity.



**THE PARENTS  
TELEVISION COUNCIL**

707 Wilshire Blvd., #2075  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Phone: 1-800-TV COUNTS  
Fax: 213-629-9254  
Grassroots@parentstv.org  
www.parentstv.org

 Parents Television Council Official Page

 ThePTC  parentstv

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## Think Media Content Doesn't Matter? Think Again



**Teen Pregnancy is on the rise.**

**More teens are committing serious violent offenses.**

**Homicide is now a leading cause of teen deaths.**

### Why is this Happening?



**"Children have neither the life experience nor the brain development to fully differentiate between a reality they are moving toward and a fiction meant solely to entertain. Children learn from media, and when they watch media with sexual references and innuendos, our research suggests they are more likely to engage in sexual activity earlier in life."** – David Bickham, Ph.D.

### TV Sex and Adolescent Behavior

**Television is a "sexual super peer,"** according to Dr. Jane Brown of the University of North Carolina. The phrase "peer pressure" is used to describe the influence a peer group can exert on a teen's decisions. Television amplifies that peer pressure by making the entire realm of television part of the teen's peer group.

When television portrays attractive, popular teenage characters as sexually active, it sends a powerful message to young viewers that there is an expectation that they, too, should be sexually active and in fact, there might be something wrong with them if they aren't.

Teens are aware that television influences their behavior. According to one survey, a third of youths 12 and older say the media encourages them to have sex by making it



**"Anyone who thinks popular culture is not helping to shape the social script for teens just isn't paying attention."** —Bill Albert, a spokesman for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

seem like "everybody does it." And why shouldn't they get that impression?

Sex scenes involving teenage characters are nearly as common on television as sex scenes involving adults.

Research shows that one of every three characters shown having intercourse on television is either a teenager or a young adult aged 18-24. Moreover, the prevalence of intercourse scenes involving teenagers has tripled since the 1997-1998 season.

But beyond making teen sex the norm, researchers have found heavy television viewing to be predictive of negative attitudes toward remaining a virgin, and positive attitudes toward "recreational" or casual sex. They have also found that the more a teenager identifies with the characters they see on primetime TV shows, the more likely they are to be sexually experienced and to expect higher levels of sexual activity among their peers.

**At least half a dozen studies in the past few years have documented a strong correlation between exposure to adult media content as children and early onset of sexual activity among teens. Viewing of sexual media content has even been found to be predictive of**

## Kids and TV Violence



By the time an average child (one who watches two to four hours of television daily) leaves elementary school, **he or she will have witnessed 8,000 murders and over 100,000 other acts of violence.**

On an individual day, there are about 5 to 6 violent acts per hour on prime-time television, and 20 to 25 acts of violence on Saturday morning children's television.

Weekly, in the United States, this adds up to about 188 hours of violent programs or about 15% of the program time.

According to Dr. Michael Rich, Director of the Center on Media and Children's Health at the Children's Hospital of Boston, **the correlation between violent media and aggressive behavior is "stronger than that of calcium intake and bone mass, lead ingestion and**



**"Anyone who thinks the media has nothing to do with this [the bloodshed at Columbine] is an idiot."** – Les Moonves, President of CBS Entertainment

**lower IQ, condom non-use and sexually acquired HIV, and environmental tobacco smoke and lung cancer, all associations that clinicians accept as fact, and on which preventive medicine is based without question."**



**Over the past 50 years, more than 1,000 studies on the effects of media violence have pointed overwhelmingly to a causal relationship between media violence and aggression. The medical health community, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and the American Psychological Association agree, "The debate is over," viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behavior, particularly in children.**

The effects of exposure to media violence are both immediate and long-lasting. Short-term exposure increases the likelihood of physically and verbally aggressive behavior, aggressive thoughts, and aggressive emotions. Recent large-scale longitudinal studies provide converging evidence linking frequent exposure to violent media in childhood with aggression later in life, including physical assaults and spouse abuse.

**"Every exposure to violence increases the chances that some day a child will behave more violently than they otherwise would."** – Dr. Rowell Huesmann, University of Michigan

### LEARN MORE ONLINE

To learn more about the research on how media affects our children, and what you can do about it, please go to [www.ParentsTV.org](http://www.ParentsTV.org)

## What Can You Do?

**It doesn't have to be this way.** We are not set on an irreversible course toward ever-more violent and vulgar TV fare. Not if we each do our part...



- ◆ **Get Educated.** Protect your children from inappropriate content by going to [www.ParentsTV.org/familyguide](http://www.ParentsTV.org/familyguide) to see which programs are safe for your children to watch, and which programs to avoid.
- ◆ **Get Active.** Don't accept inappropriate TV content! Speak out against it by contacting the networks, your broadcast affiliate or cable operator, and the sponsors of offensive programming.
- ◆ **Get Involved.** Join the 1.3 million others nationwide who are already fighting to make entertainment safe for our children. Go to [www.ParentsTV.org/grassroots](http://www.ParentsTV.org/grassroots) to find others in your area who are already working to make a difference, and see what you can do to help.



*Because our children are watching*

## Want to Learn More?

Sign up to receive free e-mail alerts from the Parents Television Council.

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Name

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