



Media and Technology

Safety Tipsheet

Category: Movies

What You Need to Know

Benefits

- Movies can be a great way to jump-start difficult conversations with your children or expose them to stories that might not otherwise grab their attention.
- Having a family movie night is a great way to spend time together. Make sure all selections are appropriate for everyone, and make sure each family member gets a chance to pick a movie for the whole group to watch.

Risks

- Copying rented movies and trading movies over the Internet are both forms of piracy. Parents are children's most important role models, and they need to make sure they are setting a good example for their children by not contributing to movie piracy. Parents also need to monitor their children to make sure they are not committing these illegal acts.
- Movies are full of product placements. Children may not understand that their favorite character may wear a certain brand or eat a certain snack because the producers of the movie are getting paid to show this product on the screen.

Ratings

The movie rating system is a guide for parents to use in making decisions about their children's movie viewing.

- G: General Audiences—All Ages Admitted
- PG: Parental Guidance Suggested—Some Material May Not Be Suitable for Children
- PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned—Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
- R: Restricted—Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian
- NC-17: No One 17 and Under Admitted

What You Can Do

- Do your homework. Movie ratings are designed to give parents guidance, not make decisions for them. Talk to another parent or older child that has already seen the movie, or look for newspaper, magazine, and online reviews.
- Watch with your child.
- Talk to your child about piracy.
- Establish a Media Use Contract with each child in your family. It is important that you have a conversation with each child to set rules and limits that are appropriate for him or her. In your conversation, be explicit about what types of movies you are comfortable with your child watching and what the consequences will be if the contract is broken. Once the contracts have been signed, post them in a prominent place in your home as a reminder.

Visit these online resources for in-depth information:

- Common Sense Media,
www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/
- Motion Picture Association of America,
www.mpa.org/RatingsParentInfo.asp

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