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## Parenting in a Media Age Lesson Objective

Time: **80 minutes**

New York State Parenting Standard: **Standard 1: Roles and Responsibilities,**  
**Standard 2: Human Growth and Development**

Aim: **For students to gain a better understanding of media's effects on children and how it can be used pro-actively to meet the needs of today's families.**

Objectives: Students Will:

- 1. Monitor and analyze their personal media use.**
- 2. Discuss the changing face of media over the years.**
- 3. Discuss the effects of media on families and, specifically, young children.**
- 4. Become proactive in learning to choose and use media wisely.**

Materials Needed:

**Lesson plan, Handouts: Value in Parenting Winter 2003- "Parenting in a Media Age," available on the Cornell Cooperative Extensions Human Development website.**  
**Handouts: Family Media Use Diary, Questions and Guidelines for TV, and Consumer Report video "Buy Me That"**

## **Parenting in a Media Age Lesson Outline**

- I. Introduction** – Suggested Pre-class Assignment
- A. Have Students keep a log for one week of what media outlets they (and their family members) used, (ie. Internet, television, music, movies, written material, etc.) using Handout: “Family Media Use diary.”
    - 1. Discuss what they (and their family members) viewed, read, listened to...
    - 2. What are the main themes shown? Sex, violence, lack of relationship commitment, immediate gratification...
    - 3. What messages do these send to young children?
  - B. Learn to use TV/Media (video, internet) as a wise consumer.
    - 1. Brainstorm what students can do to use the media wisely and pro-actively.
    - 2. What recommendations might they have for parents of young children?
- II. Awareness** –Have students Read Value in Parenting Winter 2003 Issue: Parenting in a Media Age
- A. Average amount of time child(ren) watch television daily = 7.5 hrs
  - B. In the US today, 67% of households with children own a video game system; pore people have televisions than flushing toilets!
  - C. What are the implications of this for relationships, education, creativity?
  - D. Values/Qualities of TV today (choose from the following)
    - 1. Activity 1 – Favorite show as a child (pairs) – what and why?
      - a. What did/does the media do for us? (entertain, educate, create family-time, SELL)
      - b. Identify messages you heard as a child vs. messages seen on TV/Video today.
      - c. What are the implications for families with young children?
    - 2. Activity 2 – Evaluate Television show (small group assignment)
      - a. Have students get into groups of 2-3
      - b. Ask each group to choose a television show seen on TV today that is targeted for children 10 and under.
      - c. Have someone from the group record the show and view as a group. Have them note the time of day and the network (channel) the program is on.
        - In the past children/family –friendly programming was on from 8 – 9pm in the evening on basic channel. This no longer the case.
      - d. Have students evaluate the show using Handout: “Questions and Guidelines.”
      - e. Have students do a brief 1-3 page write-up on the show they viewed and their evaluation of the show, including recommendations for parents.
      - f. Share results with class.
    - 3. Activity 3 – The Power of Commercials
      - a. By the time a child reaches the age of 60, they will have spend a full year of their life watching commercials!
      - b. Tape a series of commercials and have students analyze.
        - What is their purpose?

- Who is the target audience?
  - What techniques do they use to SELL their product/ideas?
  - Have/Would you buy this product because of the commercial? Why or Why not?
- c. What can parents do to help children understand that commercials are not accurate?
- What you see may not be what you get.
  - Encourage students to share stories from their own experiences.

### **III. Strategies to Take Charge of the TV, video games and internet (including cellular phones)**

#### **A. Review Each Strategy using handout**

1. Set limits
2. Watch by show, not clock
3. Watch with child
4. Talk back to the TV
5. Use activities while you watch
6. Become media literate/Advocate for change

#### **B. What Can We Do Instead of Watching TV, Internet, Video Games?**

1. Ask – “What doesn’t TV, Internet, Video Games etc. do for us? OR “What don’t we learn/experience while watching Using TV, Internet, Video Games etc?”
2. Brainstorm a list of other things to do with children – include what they can learn/gain from these non-media based activities.

### **IV. Kids as consumers**

- A. Activity – View segment of Consumer Reports “Buy Me That.”
- B. Identify techniques used to sell products, beliefs.
- C. What can we do as consumers to diminish this influence (mute, predict, dialogue)?

### **V. Becoming proactive**

- A. Write letters to the media – Use this as a group project/homework assignment.
- B. Have students share one change they will make when using TV and media

### **Resources:**

**Kaiser Family Foundation – [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org) Children, Health, and the Media: Report and Fact Sheet Series: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmediafactsheetseries.cfm> - reviewed June 2008**