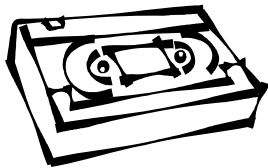
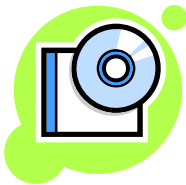


***Child Development & Family Life: Media Literacy***  
***Selecting Movies and Videos for Children/Youth***  
***Family & Consumer Judging Contest 2007- Junior & Seniors***

Selecting a movie or video game for a child is serious task. All media deliver messages – they are trying to tell you something. The messages could be positive or negative. It is important to recognize the messages and decide if they are appropriate for children. Choose movies and videos carefully. Think about the images and messages on screen before you buy.

- Does a “cool, young” actor smoke or use illegal drugs?
- Are women or men shown only in traditional careers? (Women as teachers)
- Is violence made to appear glamorous?
- Is there sexual content?



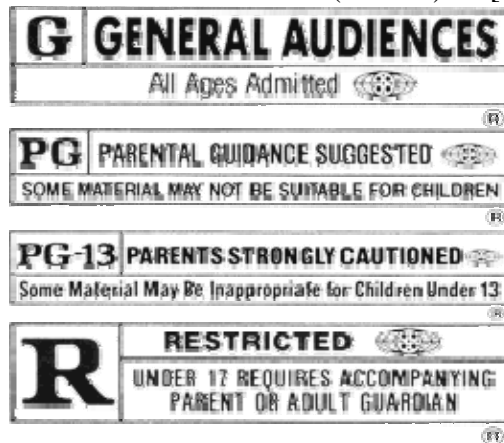
***Think It Over Before You Buy!***

- Did you know that there are rating scales to help you choose movies, games and even TV shows? Become familiar with the ratings scales. They are:
  - Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) for video games
  - Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for movies
  - T.V. Parental Guidelines for television programs
  - Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for music
  - Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) for internet sites
- Check out some **reviews** before you buy. You can find reviews in parents’ magazines and on consumer websites. Ask other people how they liked the movie or game.
- Try to rent the movie or video game to try it before buying it for a young child or your friend.
- Watch for harmful stereotypes. An example of a stereotype might be that engineers can only be boys and secretaries can only be girls.
- Movies and video games are not real life.
  - Violence in a movie, T.V. show or video game lessens the impact of our feelings about real violence.
  - Using special effects and make-up, actors can be made to look “perfect,” not the way people really look
  - Risky behaviors and illegal activities (actions that are against the law) may appear to be normal and everyday occurrences
- Remember that pediatricians (children’s doctors) recommend that children under the age of 2 should not watch T.V. or play computer games.

## ***Look for these things in a good movie***

- Check the MPAA rating scale for age and content (below)
- Ask yourself if the child will be watching movie by himself? Or will there be a parent or adult viewing it with the child? Some things can be explained by an adult, such as, when Bambi's mother is shot by a hunter. Also, an adult or parent can help a child understand what he is viewing. They can talk about the various parts and try to understand the messages.
- Animation (cartoon-like movies) does not mean that the content is appropriate for all children. Some children cannot tell fantasy apart from reality.
- Does the movie have too much strong content – language, drug use, violence or sex?

Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) [Voluntary Movie Rating System]



### **G – General audiences – all ages admitted.**

- Nothing in theme, language, nudity, sex or violence with would be offensive to young children and their parents
- **G** rating is not a “certificate of approval” A **G** rating does not mean that it is a children’s film
- Minimum violence; no nudity or sex scenes; no illegal drug use

### **PG: Parental Guidance Suggested. Some Material May Not Be Suitable For Children**

- Parents need to examine the film before letting their child attend or view
- Some material is not suitable for children, parents must decide
- May be some profanity, violence or brief nudity.
- No illegal drug use

### **PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned. Some Part May Be Inappropriate For Children Under 13**

- Beyond the boundaries of PG for theme, violence, nudity, sex, or language but does not fit the R category.
- Any drug use requires at least a PG-13 rating.
- Violence is rough or persistent
- A single use of one expletive (bad word) requires a PG-13 rating. More uses requires an R-rating

### **R: Restricted, Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent Or Adult Guardian**

- Includes hard language, tough violence, or nudity in a sexual scene or drug abuse or some combination of these

### **NC-17 No One 17 and Under Admitted**

- No children under the age of 17 will be admitted
- Violence, sex, abnormal behavior or drug abuse that most parent would consider too strong and off-limits for children and youth

## Look for these things in a good video game

- Check the ESRB rating scale for help in choosing (below)
- Choose games for multiple players or team play. They encourage social interaction and a sense of fair play.
- Find games that let you do something positive. For example, you could build your own city (*Sim City*) or roller coaster (*Roller Coaster Tycoon*)
- Find games that allow you to be creative, for example, to make original art or experiment with music or create a story.
- Find games that promote learning and exploration.
  - *Civilization* builds a new civilization that will stand the test of time
  - *Digital Zoo* designs characters for an animated film

## Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) for Video Games



### Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) Rating Symbols



#### EARLY CHILDHOOD

Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.



#### EVERYONE

Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.



#### EVERYONE 10+

Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.



### **TEEN**

Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.



### **MATURE**

Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.



### **ADULTS ONLY**

Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.



### **RATING PENDING**

Titles listed as **RP (Rating Pending)** have been submitted to the ESRB and are awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)