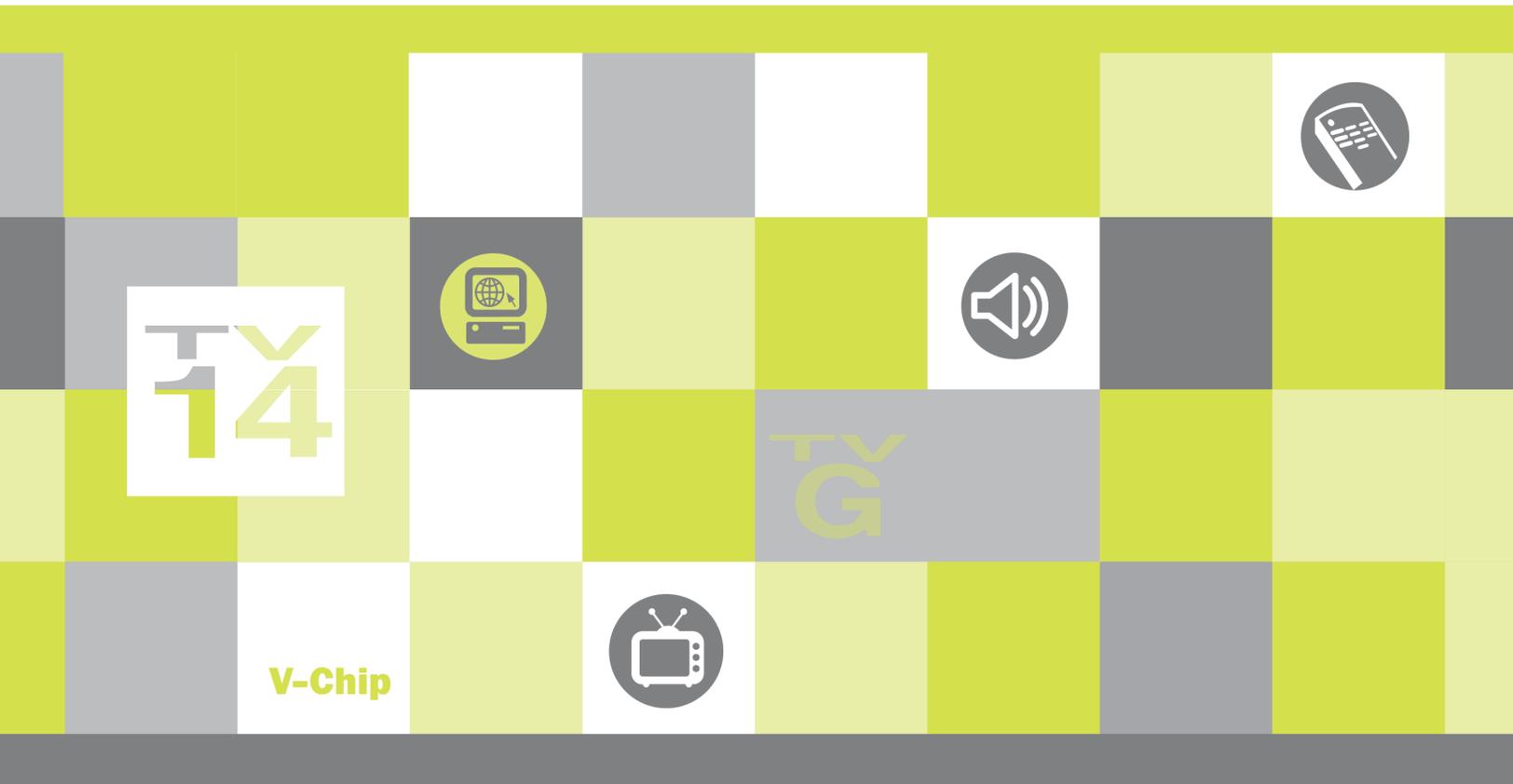




PARENTS, MEDIA AND PUBLIC POLICY: A KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION SURVEY

Fall 2004



A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of squares in various shades of gray, arranged in a pattern that resembles a staircase or a series of steps. The squares are of different sizes and are scattered across the lower half of the page.

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Introduction

When Justin Timberlake ripped the front off Janet Jackson's costume during her halftime performance at the 2004 Super Bowl, it seemed as if he also unleashed years of pent up frustration over the increasingly risqué content of media—a frustration that burst forth from parents, pundits and policymakers, and that soon occupied the nation's airwaves, newspaper columns, and water cooler conversations.

After several years of relative quiet on Capitol Hill and at the FCC, policymakers have once again stepped into the fray, scheduling hearings, issuing a Notice of Inquiry, and introducing legislation on a variety of issues concerning children and media. In addition to concerns about indecency, new issues have appeared on the national agenda, including the impact of media on very young children, and the possible role of media in the rise of childhood obesity.

As the fall television season debuts and policymakers return to Washington to consider a range of media-related initiatives, it is important that we pause to consider the views and experiences of those at the heart of these debates: the parents who are struggling to raise their kids in an increasingly media-saturated environment.

This summary reports on data from a national survey of parents conducted in July and August 2004. On several issues, the summary includes data tracking parents' responses to identical questions over the years; other issues are addressed here for the first time.

The purpose of this report is to help inform the policymaking process and decision-making within the media industry, by offering some insights into what parents are most concerned about, the influences they see on their own children's lives, whether or not they are making use of the tools policymakers and the media industry have offered them to date, and their opinions on several media-related reforms that have been proposed.





Key Findings

Parents' concerns about media

Parents are deeply concerned about children's exposure to "inappropriate" content in entertainment media, especially on TV. Two out of three parents (63%) say they are "very" concerned that children are being exposed to too much inappropriate content in entertainment media, and another one in four (26%) say they are "somewhat" concerned. When asked which type of media content concerns them the most, a third (34%) say TV, 20% say all media concern them equally, 16% say the Internet is of greatest concern, 10% say movies, 7% music, and 5% say video games.

Chart 1 Parents' level of concern that children are being exposed to too much inappropriate content in entertainment media

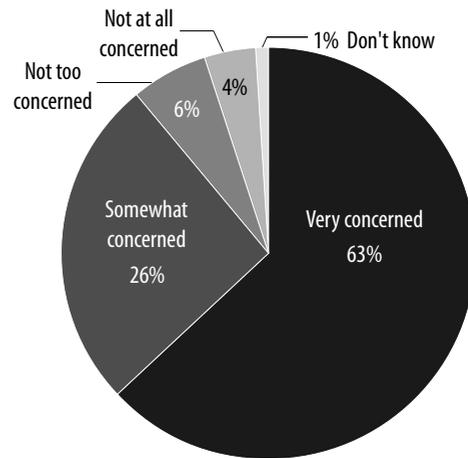
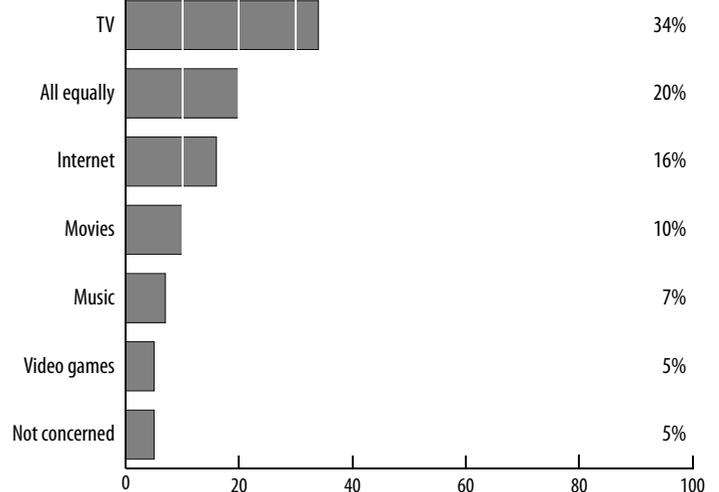
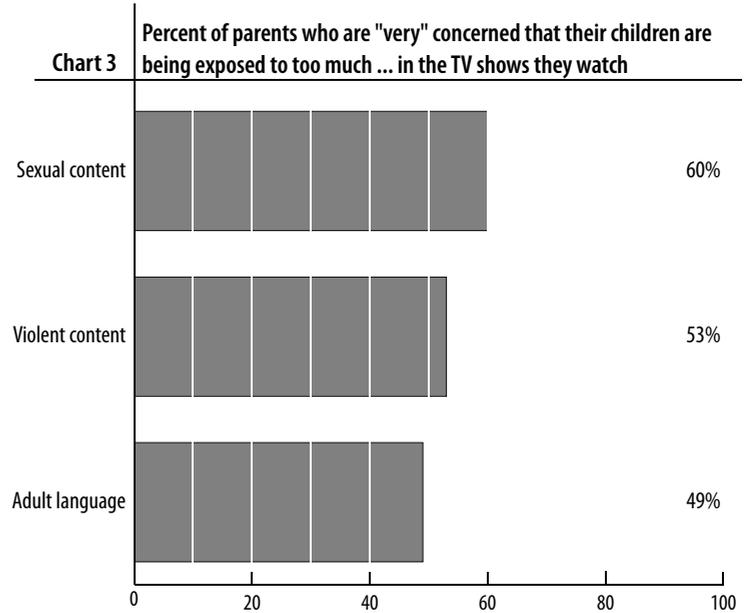


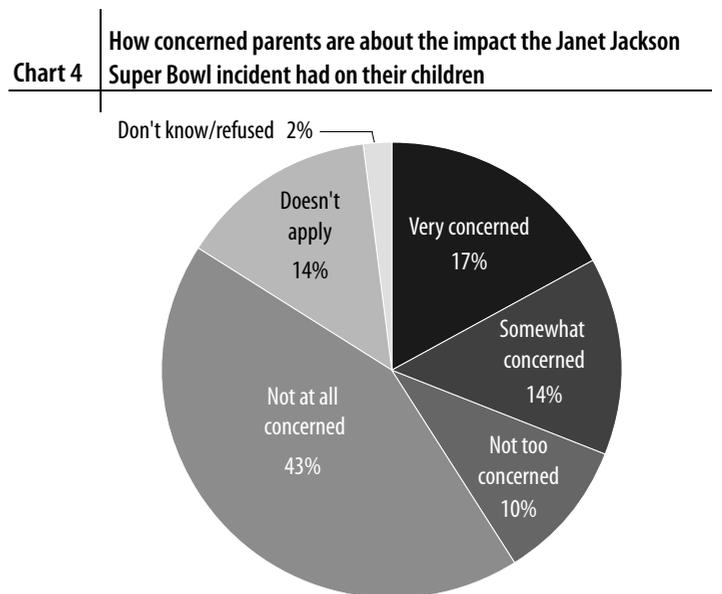
Chart 2 Which medium parents are *most* concerned about when it comes to inappropriate content



When it comes to TV, parents are most concerned that their children are being exposed to too much sexual content, followed by concerns about violence and adult language. Six in ten parents (60%) say they are “very” concerned that their children are being exposed to too much sexual content in the TV shows they watch; 53% are “very” concerned about violent content, and 49% about adult language.

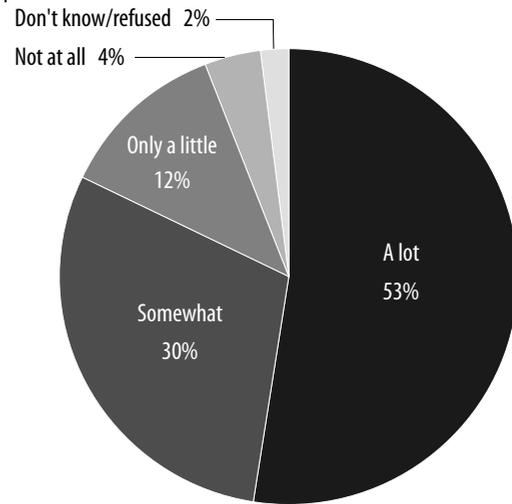


By contrast, most parents today say that looking back on it, they are not concerned about the impact the Janet Jackson Super Bowl incident had on their children. Four in ten parents (43%) say they are “not at all” concerned about the impact the incident had on their kids, another 14% say it simply doesn’t apply to their children because they are either too young or didn’t see it, and 10% say they are “not too” concerned. About one in six (17%) say they are “very” concerned and 14% say “somewhat.”



The vast majority of parents believe that sexual and violent content on TV contributes to children’s behaviors, including a substantial proportion of parents who believe TV contributes “a lot.” More than half (53%) of all parents say they believe that exposure to sexual content in TV shows contributes “a lot” to children becoming involved in sexual situations before they’re ready, with another 30% saying they believe it contributes “somewhat.” Four in ten parents (44%) say TV violence contributes “a lot” to violent behavior in children, with another 37% saying it contributes “somewhat.”

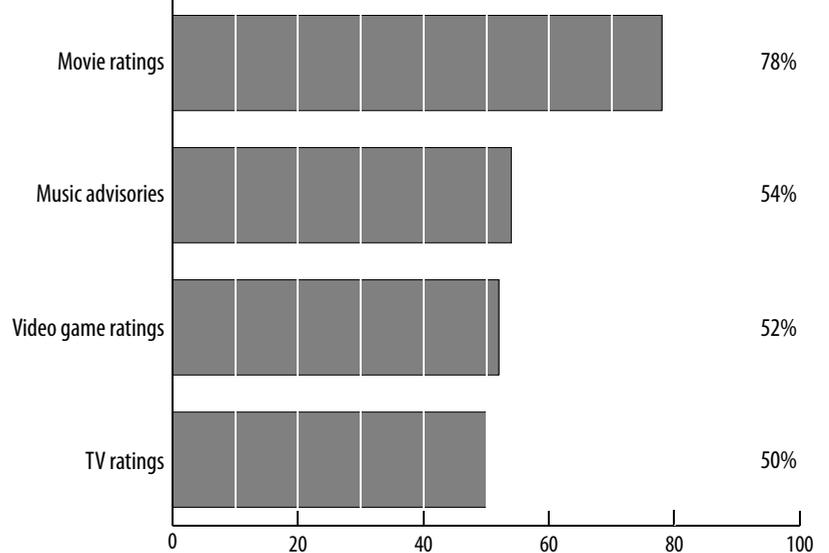
Chart 5 Degree to which parents think exposure to sexual content on TV contributes to children becoming involved in sexual situations before they're ready



TV ratings

Half (50%) of all parents say they have used the TV ratings, and one in four (24%) say they use them “often” to help guide their children’s television choices. These rates of usage have remained relatively stable since the Foundation first began measuring them in 1998. A similar proportion of parents report having ever used the advisories on music CDs and tapes (54%) or video games (52%); many more parents report having used the ratings on movies (78%) to guide their family’s choices.

Chart 6 Percent of parents who have ever used ... to guide their family's media choices



The vast majority of parents who have used the TV ratings say they find them useful, including more than a third who say they are “very” useful (38%) and half (50%) who say they are “some-what” useful. The proportion who say they find the ratings “very” useful has dropped by ten percentage points since 2001 (from 48% to 38%), and is lower than for any of the other media ratings or advisory systems asked about in the survey (53% of those who have used them say they find the video game ratings “very” useful, 48% for music CDs/tapes, and 45% for movies).

Parents have mixed views on the accuracy of the TV ratings, with about half (52%) of those who have used the ratings saying that most shows are rated in a way that accurately reflects their content, while about four in ten (39%) say most shows are not rated accurately. When asked how often they think TV shows are given ratings that do not accurately reflect their content, 14% say they think this happens “most of the time,” with another 46% saying “some of the time.” A third (33%) say shows are “hardly ever” or “never” (2%) rated inaccurately.

Chart 7 How useful parents say the TV ratings have been in helping to guide their family's choices, among those who have used them

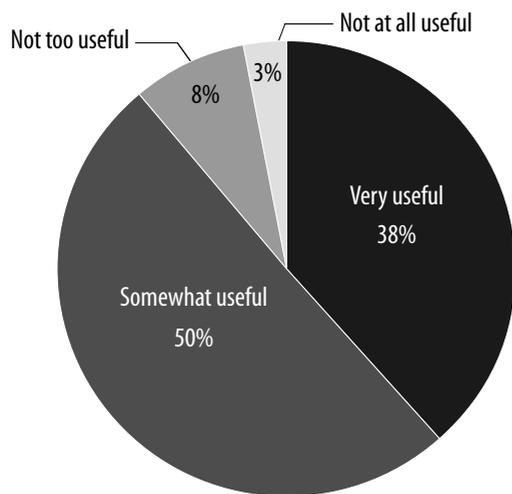
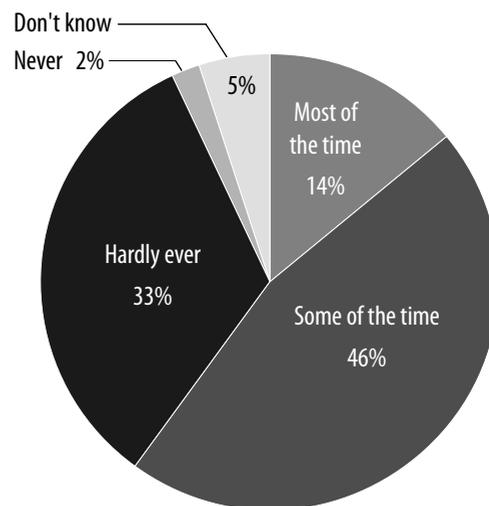
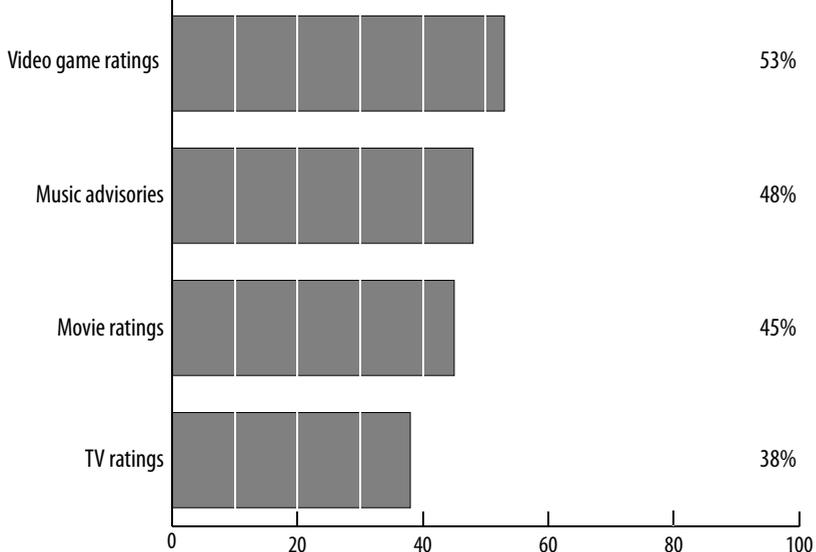


Chart 9 Among parents who have used the TV ratings system, how often they believe TV shows are given ratings that do not accurately reflect their content



Note: Based on Form B respondents, n=521.

Chart 8 Percent of parents who find each ratings/advisory system "very" useful, among parents who have used them



Many parents are unfamiliar with the ratings used in the TV ratings system, and this is especially true with regard to ratings used on shows for young children.

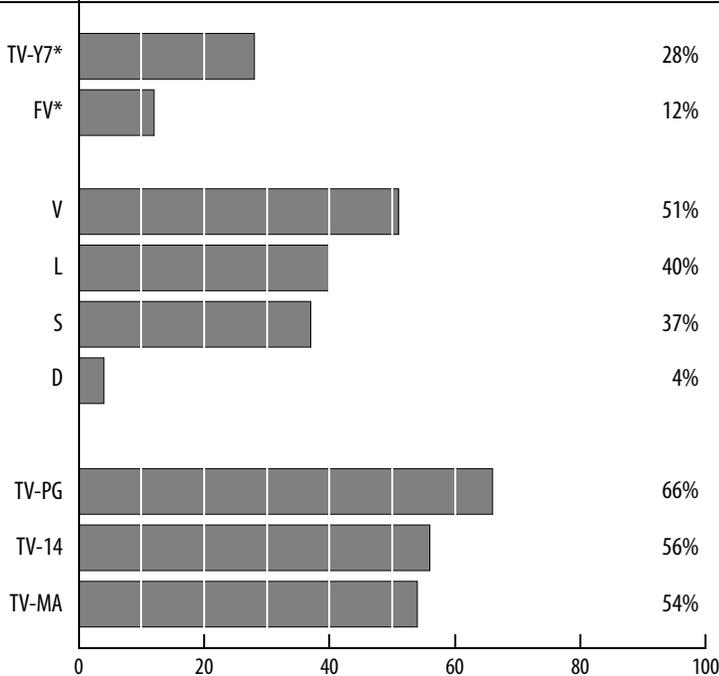
Ratings for children's programming:

For example, only one in four (24%) parents of 2-6 year-olds could name any of the ratings that would apply to programming appropriate for children that age (14% named either TV-Y, TV-Y7, FV or EI, while another 10% named either TV-G or simply G).

When asked if they knew what the rating TV-Y7 means, about one in four (28%) parents of 2-6 year-olds) gave a correct response (directed to children age 7 and older); 13% said it meant the show was designed for children *under* age 7, and the rest did not know (38%), or had never even heard of the ratings system at all (21%).

Only 12% of parents of young children knew that the rating FV ("fantasy violence") was related to violence, and 8% thought it meant "family viewing." FV is the only rating that denotes anything about the violent content of children's programming, one of the impetuses for the development of the ratings system.

Chart 10 Percent of parents who know what various ratings categories mean



*Among parents of children 2-6 years old, n=461.

Ratings for general audience programming:

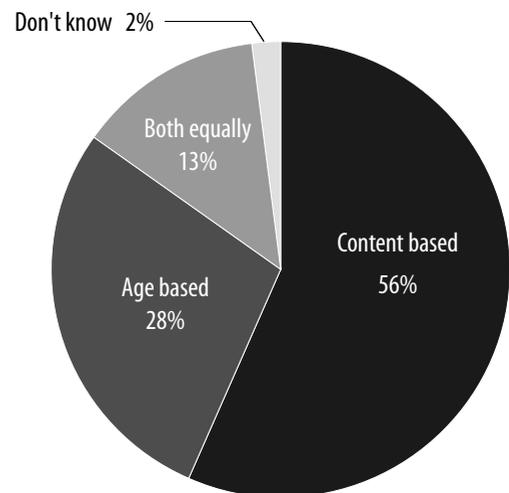
A majority of parents could define the age-based ratings TV-PG (66%, parental guidance suggested, may be inappropriate for younger children), TV-14 (56%; for children 14 or older), and TV-MA (54%, "mature audience").

Fewer parents could define the content-based ratings "V" (51%, violence), "L" (40%, language), or "S" (37%, sex), and only 4% knew what the rating "D" meant (suggestive or sexual dialogue; 2% thought it referenced drug use).

Overall, one in five parents (20%) said they had never even heard of the TV ratings system, an increase from 14% of parents in 2000 and 2001.

Despite the fact that parents seem more familiar with the age-based portion of the ratings, those who have used them are twice as likely to say the content-based ratings provide more useful information (56%) than age-based ones (28%).

Chart 11 Which part of the TV ratings parents say provides the most useful information, among parents who have ever used them



V-Chip

The proportion of parents who use the V-Chip has increased significantly, but many either haven't bought a new TV since sets began including the Chip, or aren't aware that their new TV includes one. One in four (26%) parents haven't bought a new TV since January 2000, when manufacturers were required to include a V-Chip in all new sets over 13 inches. Four in ten (39%) say they have bought a new TV, but don't think they have a V-Chip in it, 20% are aware they have a V-Chip but have chosen not to use it, and 15% have used the device (up from 7% in 2001).

- Among parents who have a V-Chip (and know it), 42% say they've used it, while 58% say they haven't.
- The vast majority of parents who have used the V-Chip say they found it useful, including 61% who say it was "very" useful and 28% who say "somewhat" useful.
- Among parents who are aware that they have a V-Chip but have chosen not to use it, 60% say the main reason is that an adult is usually nearby when their kids watch TV, and 20% say it's because they trust their children to make their own decisions.

Chart 12 | Percent of parents who have ever used the V-Chip

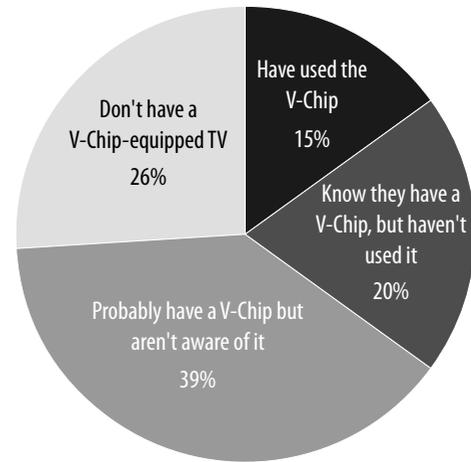
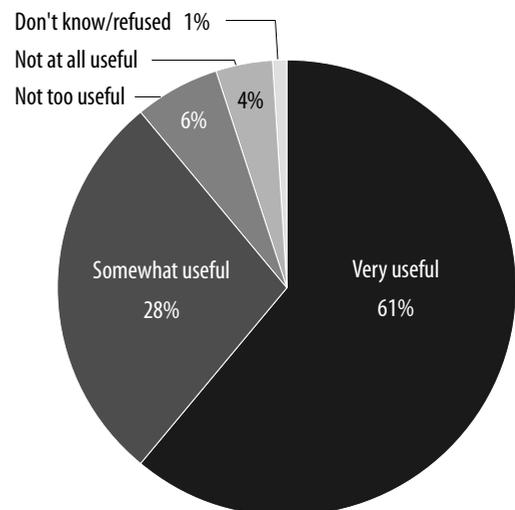


Chart 13 | Among parents who have tried the V-Chip, how useful they found it



Public policy

Parents favor public policies to regulate the amount of sex and violence on TV, and to apply content standards to cable as well as broadcast TV. Two-thirds of parents (63%) say they favor “new regulations to limit the amount of sex and violence in TV shows during the early evening hours, when children are most likely to be watching,” while 35% oppose them. The issue of applying the same standards regarding sex, violence and adult language to cable as well as to broadcast TV was a closer call, with 52% of parents saying cable should be subject to the same standards, and 43% saying it should not.

Parents favor displaying the TV ratings more prominently on the TV screen, but they oppose the creation of a single ratings system that would apply to TV, movies, video games and music. A majority (55%) of parents say they think the ratings “should be displayed more prominently to make it easier for parents to notice them,” while 39% disagree. However, most parents (57%) say they’d rather keep things as they are than switch to a single ratings system for TV, movies, video games and music (34% would prefer a single ratings system).

Chart 15 Percent of parents who favor new regulations to limit sex and violence in TV content during early evening

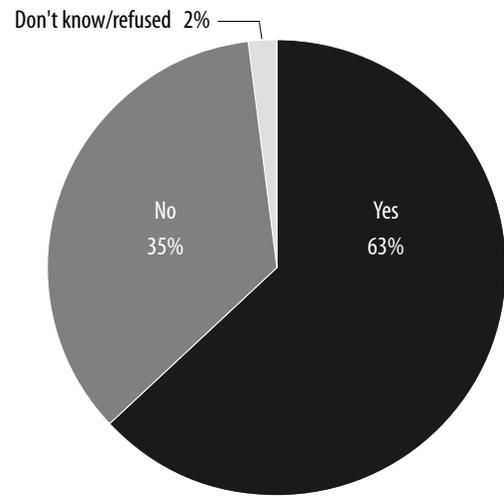


Chart 14 Percent of parents who believe cable TV should be subject to the same content standards as broadcast TV

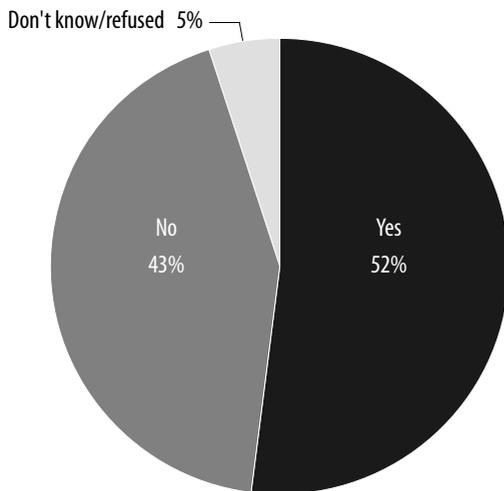
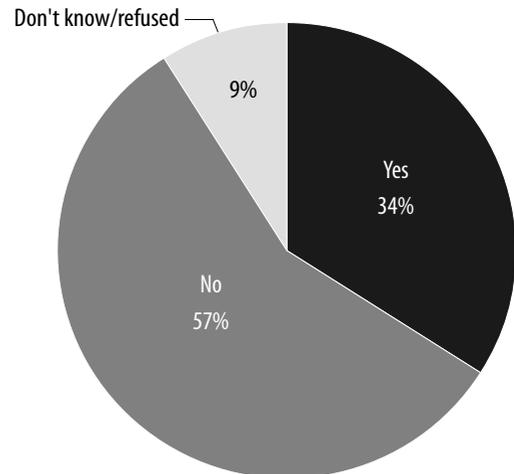


Chart 16 Percent of parents who favor the creation of a single ratings system



Educational TV

Only about one in ten parents say they think TV contributes “a lot” when it comes to helping young children learn to read, get along with others, or start school ready to learn, with another third of parents saying it helps “somewhat.”

When asked how much they think TV helps young children learn to read, 9% of parents say “a lot” and 27% say “somewhat,” while two thirds say either “only a little” (32%) or “not at all” (30%). Parents have similar feelings about whether TV helps young children learn how to get along with others, with 8% saying it helps “a lot” and 35% saying “somewhat,” while the majority says it helps either “only a little” (33%) or “not at all” (23%). Parents are somewhat more likely to say TV helps young children start school ready to learn, with 11% agreeing that it helps “a lot” and 39% saying “somewhat,” and just under half saying either “only a little” (31%) or “not at all” (16%).

Most parents of younger children (2-13 years old) are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the number and quality of educational TV shows now available for their children to watch. About one in ten (12%) say they are “very” satisfied, half (51%) say they are “somewhat” satisfied, and about a third are either “not too” (19%) or “not at all” (13%) satisfied.

Most parents aren’t aware of how the TV ratings can help them identify educational programming. Only 5% of parents of 2-6 year-olds know that the “E/I” TV rating indicates programming that is educational or instructional for young children.

Chart 17 Parents' beliefs about how much TV helps young children start school ready to learn

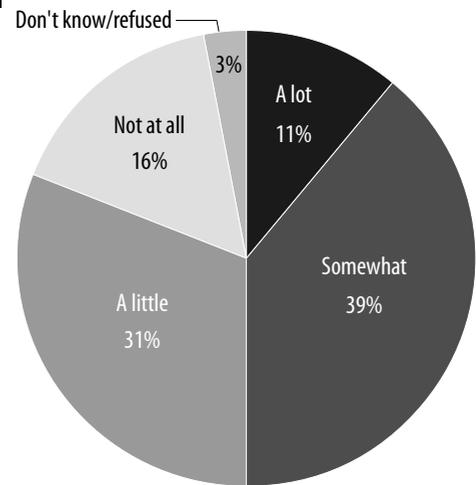
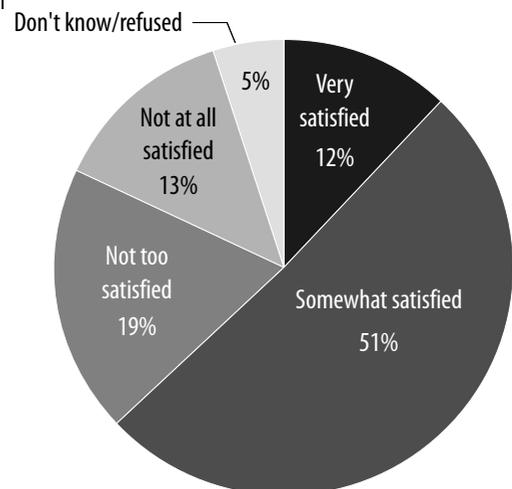


Chart 18 Among parents of children ages 2-13, the degree of satisfaction with the number and quality of educational TV shows available for their children to watch



TV and the very young

Most parents are unaware that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no TV for children under age two. Among all parents with a child under age 2, only 6% are aware of the AAP recommendation that children under two should not watch TV at all. Another 7% believe they know what the AAP has recommended, but incorrectly think the suggestion is either that children watch no more than 1-2 hours a day or limit their viewing to educational shows. As mentioned above, most parents of young children are not familiar with the TV ratings used to designate programming intended for children, or to indicate either educational or violent content in shows.

Food advertising on TV

The vast majority of parents believe children's eating habits are influenced by food advertising on TV, and two out of three say their children ask them to buy certain foods because they've seen them advertised on TV; however, most oppose restricting ads for junk food during children's TV shows. About half (49%) of parents say children's food choices and eating habits are influenced "a lot" by TV ads, with another 28% saying they are influenced "somewhat." A third (33%) say their own children "often" ask them to buy certain grocery items because they've seen them advertised on TV, with another third (33%) saying their children "sometimes" do. However, a majority of parents (56%) say they oppose restricting "junk food" ads during children's TV shows, with 37% saying they favor such restrictions.

Chart 19 Degree to which parents think children's food choices and eating habits are influenced by the ads they see on TV

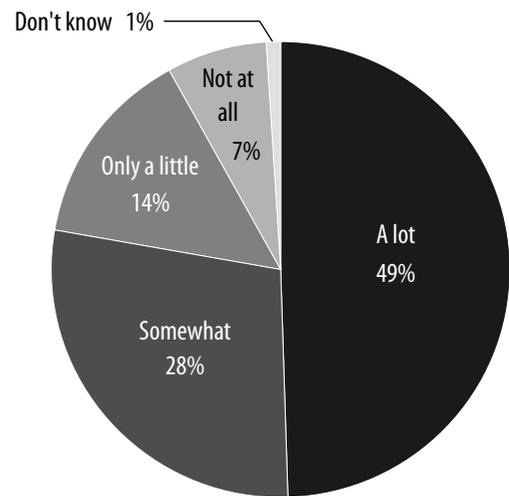


Chart 20 How frequently children ask their parents to buy grocery items because they've seen them advertised on TV

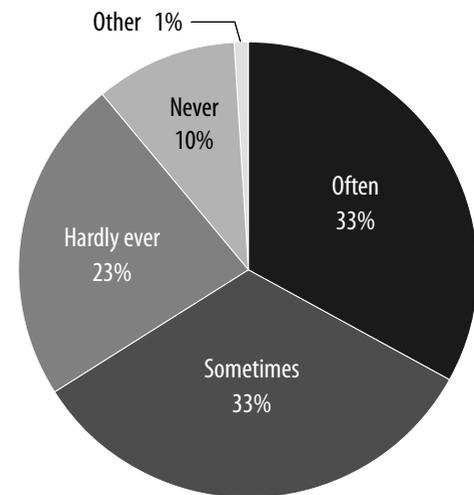
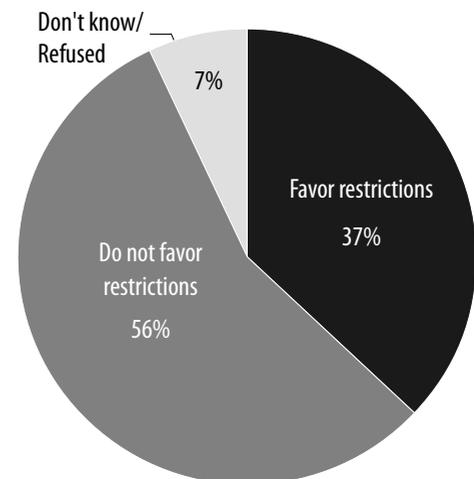


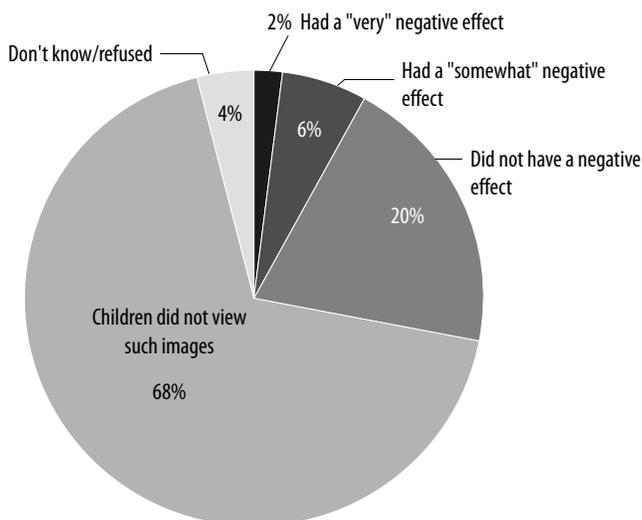
Chart 21 Percent of parents who favor restricting "junk food" ads on children's TV



Violence in the news

About three out of ten parents (29%) say their children have viewed images related to such graphic incidents as the beheading of hostages or the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, but most don't believe it had a negative effect on them. Overall, about a third of all parents (31%) say they have been "very concerned" about their children's exposure to "graphic" news stories from the war in Iraq, and another 30% say they have been "somewhat" concerned. About three in ten parents (29%) say their children have viewed such stories, while 68% say their children have not. Most of those whose children did see such images do not believe it affected their children negatively. Twenty percent of parents say their children saw such stories without suffering any negative effects, 6% say their children viewed them and that it had a "somewhat" negative effect, and just 2% say their children saw such images and it had a "very" negative effect on them. Presumably, most of the parents who were "very" concerned about the impact of violent news successfully shielded their children from such programming.

Chart 22 Parents' beliefs about the impact on their children of viewing graphic news stories such as the beheading of hostages and the abuse of Iraqi prisoners



Public service announcements

A majority of parents believe TV stations should be required to run public service announcements (PSAs), devoting one minute per hour during prime time to such messages. Nearly six in ten (59%) agree that "all TV stations should be required to devote one minute per hour to PSAs during prime time," while one in three (36%) say "it should be left up to TV stations themselves to decide whether and when to run PSAs." While broadcasters are required to "serve the public interest," there are no specific requirements regarding how much time to make available to PSAs or what time of day to run them; in fact, they are free to meet their public interest obligations without running any PSAs at all. A Foundation study from 2002 found that broadcast stations donate an average of 17 seconds an hour to PSAs (out of an average of more than 17 minutes an hour of non-programming content), and that 43% of all PSAs that are broadcast run between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. (*Shouting to be Heard: Public Service Advertising in a New Media Age, 2002*).

Media in the home

Despite parents' concerns about media—especially TV—most are providing a media-rich environment for their children to grow up in. Nearly all parents (99%) have a TV in the home (including 62% who have three or more sets), 81% have cable or satellite, 73% have Internet access, 63% have a video game player, 32% have premium cable channels, and 17% have a TV or DVD player in their car, with another 5% saying they are "very" likely to get one within the next year.



Conclusion

Without a doubt, parents are deeply concerned about the impact today's media are having on their children. And perhaps surprisingly—in this era of concern about the Internet, music lyrics, and extreme video games—the medium that appears to be uppermost on parents' minds is TV. Parents are very concerned that their children are exposed to too much sexual content, violence and adult language on TV.

And many of them don't hesitate to hold television responsible for children's behaviors as well, saying that TV contributes "a lot" to violent behavior and to children becoming involved in sexual situations before they're ready. On the other hand, in hindsight most parents say they are not very concerned about the impact the Janet Jackson episode had on their children. It appears that the sex, violence and adult language they perceive in the TV shows their children watch day in and day out is of greater concern to parents than the single incident that helped spark so much of the current debate in the public arena.

Many parents make use of the TV ratings or the V-Chip, and those who do say they find them both helpful. And while fewer parents who use them say the TV ratings are "very" useful than say the same about the other media ratings, it is still the case that the vast majority of parents who have used the TV ratings find them useful, and about half say most shows are rated in a way that accurately reflects their content. Those who have used the V-Chip are more enthusiastic, with two-thirds saying it was "very" useful. And while this survey documents a significant increase in the number of parents who are using the V-Chip, it is still a small proportion of parents overall. One in four parents still don't have a TV new enough to include a V-Chip, and about half of those who do have a new TV aren't aware that a V-Chip is included.

Policymakers, advocates, and members of the media industry who are committed to making the TV ratings system and the V-Chip an effective tool for parents may want to step up their public education efforts. There are still many parents who have never heard of the TV ratings or the V-Chip, and many others who don't understand what the various ratings mean. The problem seems particularly acute with regard to ratings for children's shows.

There are also many parents who have chosen not to use either the ratings or the V-Chip. Policymakers and advocates will need to decide what level of usage they consider to be a success, or if there are other alternatives they feel would be more effective, such as regulations on the amount of sex and violence that can be included in programming during certain hours.

There certainly are some changes in the ratings system and the V-Chip that would be of interest to parents. For example, most say they think the ratings should be displayed on-screen more prominently to make it easier for parents to notice them. But they don't support creating a single ratings system that would replace the myriad of ratings now used for movies, music, TV and video games.

Whatever changes the industry or policymakers may choose to make, parents are clear that the content-based part of the ratings ("V" for violence, or "S" for sex) is more useful to them than the age-based part (TV-14). Should policymakers or the industry choose to explore reforms to the ratings system, they may want to consider creating more understandable ratings in two areas in particular: first, to designate violence in children's programming (only 12% of parents of young children knew the rating "FV" referred to violence, and 8% mistook it for designating "family viewing"), and second, to indicate a show with talk about sexual or other sensitive topics in general audience programming (only 4% of all parents knew that the rating "D" designates a show with "suggestive dialogue").

A majority of parents favor one of the bolder proposals that has been put forward to protect children from harmful content on TV, creating "new regulations to limit the amount of sex and violence in TV shows during the early evening hours." But they are more closely split when it comes to applying content standards to cable.

Given the graphic and intensely violent nature of much of the news coverage coming out of Iraq, some have suggested that violence in the news may be as much or greater of a concern than violence in other television programming. However, this survey indicates that far fewer parents are "very" concerned about their children being exposed to these kinds of news stories (31%) than to violent content in the TV shows they watch (53%). This may be a result of fewer parents letting their children watch the news. Those who are most concerned appear to have shielded their children from such coverage.

Another topic that has been of increasing interest recently has been the possible role of food advertising in the increasing rates of childhood obesity. Parents are unequivocal in their belief that food ads on TV influence children's food choices and eating habits, but most do not support restrictions on such ads. On the other hand, parents do favor requiring TV stations to air positive advertising in the form of public service announcements: nearly six in ten (59%) say stations should be required to devote at least one minute per hour during prime time to PSAs.

Parents' beliefs about the influence of TV advertising and sexual or violent content does not extend to their beliefs about the role TV is playing in helping to educate young children. Only about one in ten say TV helps young children "a lot" when it comes to learning to read, learning how to get along with others, or starting school ready to learn. Most parents also appear to be luke-warm about the quality and quantity of educational shows now offered on TV. And when it comes to very young children, few parents are aware that the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended no TV for children under two years of age.

Finally, it is hard to escape some sense of disconnect between parents' concerns about media and their actions with regard to bringing media into their children's lives. Indeed, previous Foundation surveys have indicated that two-thirds (65%) of children 8 and older have a TV in their bedroom (*Kids & Media @ the New Millennium*, 1999) as do a third (36%) of children six and under (*Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, 2003). And in the current survey, despite parents' concerns, two-thirds indicate that they have 3 or more TVs in their homes, 4 out of 5 have cable or satellite, a third have premium cable channels, and one in six (17%) have a TV or DVD player in the family car, with another 5% saying they are "very" likely to get one within the next year.

Clearly, the modern parent has a conflicted relationship with TV: deeply concerned about the impact it is having on their children, yet inviting it into their homes, their children's bedrooms, and even their automobiles; favoring limits on sex and violence in TV shows, but opposing restrictions on junk food ads in children's shows, despite being convinced that such ads influence children's food choices. These and other seeming contradictions are simply part of today's media landscape, an important but not always clear background against which policymakers, advocates and the television industry itself must seek common ground.



Survey Topline Results

Parents, Media, And Public Policy

Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Kaiser Family Foundation

N=1,001 parents of children aged 2-17

Margin of error: Plus or minus 3.6 percentage points

Interview Dates: July 12–August 3, 2004

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates a value less than 1%. Because percentages are rounded they may not total 100%.

INTRODUCTION: Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling for Princeton Survey Research. We're conducting a national opinion survey about some important issues facing families today, and would very much like to include your household.

Q.1 Now I have a few questions about the electronic items in your home. How many TVs do you have in your household?

None	*
One	11
Two	26
Three	31
Four	18
Five or more	13
Don't know/Refused	*

Q.2 As best you can recall, in what year did you most recently buy a new TV for your household?

Since January 1st 2004	15
2003	24
2002	15
2001	10
2000	9
Before 2000	22
Don't know/Refused	4
Do not have TV/DK	1

Q.3 Do you get cable or satellite TV, or not?

Yes	81
No	18
Don't know/Refused	0
Do not have TV/DK	1

Q.4 Do you subscribe to HBO or any other premium channels?

Yes	32
No	49
Do not get cable/satellite TV	18
Don't know/Refused	1
Do not have TV/DK	1

Q.5 Do you have any console video game players like X-box or Playstation in your household?

Yes	63
No	36
Don't know/Refused	*
Do not have TV/DK	1

Q.6 Is there a TV or DVD player in any of the vehicles you use to transport your children?

Yes	17
No	83
Don't know/Refused	0

Q.6a. How likely are you to purchase a TV or DVD player for your vehicle in the next year or so...

Very likely	5
Somewhat likely	8
Not too likely	12
Not at all likely	57
Don't know/Refused	1
Already have TV or DVD player in vehicle	17

Q.7 Do you have Internet access in your home, or not?

Yes	73
No	27
Don't know/Refused	0

Q.8 Now I have a few questions about young children and TV ... How much, if at all, do you think TV helps young children ... (INSERT)? (Do you think TV helps a lot, somewhat, not too much, or not at all?)

	A lot	Somewhat	Only a little	Not at all	DK/ Ref.
a. Learn to read	9	27	32	30	2
b. Learn how to get along with others	8	35	33	23	2
c. Start school ready to learn	11	39	31	16	3

Q.9 Thinking about the educational shows for children on TV these days, how satisfied are you with the number and quality of educational shows now available for your children to watch? Are you...

Based on parents with children aged 2-13 (n=809)

Very satisfied	12
Somewhat satisfied	51
Not too satisfied	19
Not at all satisfied	13
Don't know/Refused	5

Q.10 On another subject... About six years ago, the television industry introduced a ratings system designed to help parents decide whether a TV show is appropriate for their family to watch. Some of the ratings used are TV-G, TV-PG and TV-14. Before this interview, had you ever heard of the TV ratings system, or not?

	Current	6/01 ¹	3/00 ²	4/99 ³	9/98 ⁴	4/98 ⁵
Yes, heard of	80	85	85	80	79	82
No, have not	20	14	14	19	20	18
Don't know/Refused	*	*	1	*	1	*

Q.11 The TV ratings system is designed to work with a device called a “V-Chip” you can use to block shows with certain ratings from your television. Before this interview, had you ever heard of the V-Chip, or not?

	Current	6/01	3/00
Yes	63	64	61
No	36	35	39
Don't know/Refused	1	1	*

Q.12 In addition to TV, other entertainment media like movies, video games, and music also have ratings systems or parental advisory labels to help people decide whether material is appropriate for their family. Please tell me if you have ever used each of the following to help guide your own family’s choices. (First,) have you ever used ... (INSERT) (to help guide your family’s choices)?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
a. The ratings for TV shows			
Current	50	50	0
6/01	56	44	0
4/99	52	48	*
4/98	54	46	*
b. The ratings for movies			
Current	78	22	*
6/01	84	16	*
4/99	82	18	*
4/98	86	14	*
c. The parental advisories on music CD's and tapes			
Current	54	45	*
6/01	50	49	1
4/99	42	57	1
4/98	41	58	1
d. The parental advisories on video games ⁶			
Current	52	47	1
6/01	59	39	1
4/99	53	46	1
4/98	54	46	*

Q.13 Please tell me how useful each of the following has been in helping to guide your family’s choices... What about... (INSERT)? Have they been very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not at all useful (in helping to guide your family’s choices)?:

Based on parents who have ever used each device

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not too useful	Not at all useful	DK/Ref
a. The ratings for TV shows					
Current (n=502)	38	50	8	3	1
6/01 (n=446)	48	44	6	1	1
4/99 (n=527)	40	50	7	3	*
4/98 (n=728)	42	51	5	2	*
b. The ratings for movies					
Current (n=780)	45	47	5	2	*
6/01 (n=673)	53	40	5	2	1
4/99 (n=828)	54	40	4	1	*
4/98 (n=1,111)	55	40	3	2	*
c. The parental advisories on music CD's and tapes					
Current (n=550)	48	40	7	3	2
6/01 (n=408)	52	38	6	3	1
4/99 (n=437)	51	37	7	4	1
4/98 (n=538)	45	42	7	4	2
d. The parental advisories on video games ⁷					
Current (n=535)	53	38	4	3	2
6/01 (n=480)	52	41	3	3	2
4/99 (n=539)	42	44	8	4	2
4/98 (n=704)	43	46	6	3	2

Q.14 Now, thinking specifically about the TV ratings system... How frequently, if ever, do you use the TV ratings to help make decisions about what shows your children will watch...

	Current	6/01	4/99	9/98	4/98
Often	24	28	22	25	31
Sometimes	21	25	22	15	23
Hardly ever	16	18	19	14	13
Never	18	13	17	26	14
Don't know/Refused	1	1	*	0	1
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	20	18

Q.15 Some people think there are too many different ratings systems and it would be easier for parents if there were a single ratings system for TV, movies, video games, and music. Others think these media are too different from one another, and it would be too confusing to redo the ratings now. Do you think there should be a single ratings system or keep things as they are?⁸

Single ratings system	34
Keep things as they are	57
Don't know/Refused	9

Q.16a How concerned are you, if at all, that children in this country are being exposed to too much inappropriate content in entertainment media? Are you...

Very concerned	63
Somewhat concerned	26
Not too concerned	6
Not at all concerned	4
Don't know/Refused	1

Q.16b Which ONE of the following kinds of entertainment media concerns you the most? Is it inappropriate content in...

TV	34
The Internet	16
Movies	10
Music	7
Video games	5
Other specific media (VOL.)	*
All about equal/All bad (VOL.)	20
Not at all concerned (Q16a)/Not seriously concerned about any (VOL.)	5
Don't know/Refused	2

Q.17a Now I have some questions focusing on television...The American Academy of Pediatrics has made a recommendation regarding TV watching and children under age two. Do you happen to know what they have recommended?

Q.17b As far as you know, which of the following do they recommend for children under age two...

Among Parents With Any Child Under 2

Yes, know recommendation (No TV at all)	6
Yes, incorrect response	7
No more than 1 to 2 hours of TV per day	5
Educational TV only	3
No, don't know recommendation	87

Q.18 Parents have different concerns about the content of the TV shows their children watch. How concerned are you that your children are being exposed to too much...(INSERT) in the TV shows they watch? (Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?)

	Very	Somewhat	Not too	Not at all	Doesn't apply (vol.)	DK/ Ref.
a. Violent content	53	27	7	10	3	*
b. Sexual content	60	20	8	8	4	*
c. Adult language	49	26	10	11	4	*

(Q.19 & Q.20 ROTATED)

Q.19 How much, if at all, do you think exposure to violence in TV shows contributes to violent behavior in children? Does it contribute ...

	Current	6/01
A lot	44	47
Somewhat	37	32
Only a little	14	14
Not at all	5	6
Don't know/Refused	1	2

Q.20 How much, if at all, do you think exposure to sexual content in TV shows contributes to children becoming involved in sexual situations before they're ready? Does it contribute...

	Current	6/01
A lot	53	48
Somewhat	30	32
Only a little	12	12
Not at all	4	6
Don't know/Refused	2	3

Q.21 How much, if at all, do you think children's food choices and eating habits are influenced by the ads they see on TV? Are they are influenced...

A lot	49
Somewhat	28
Only a little	14
Not at all	7
Doesn't apply (kids don't watch TV/don't watch commercial TV) (VOL.)	*
Don't know/Refused	1

Q.22 How frequently, if at all, do your own children ask you to buy certain grocery items because they've seen them advertised on TV...

Often	33
Sometimes	33
Hardly ever	23
Never	10
Doesn't apply (kids don't watch TV/don't watch commercial TV) (VOL.)	1
Don't know/Refused	*

Q.23 How often, if ever, do you watch TV news? Would you say...

Every day	57
A few times a week	22
Once in a while	16
Never	5
Don't know/Refused	0

Q.24 When you watch TV news, how often – if ever – is one of your children in the room with you...

Based on those who watch TV news (n=964)

Most of the time	18
Some of the time	32
Once in a while	34
Never	15
Don't know/Refused	1

Q.25 Since the war in Iraq, there have been several graphic news stories, such as the beheading of hostages and the abuse of Iraqi prisoners. How concerned, if at all, have you been about your children's exposure to these kinds of TV news stories...

Very concerned	31
Somewhat concerned	30
Not too concerned	16
Not at all concerned	18
Doesn't apply (kids don't watch TV news/not exposed to such TV news stories)	
(VOL.)	5
Don't know/Refused	*

Q.26 As far as you know, have your children viewed any images related to these events on TV?

Yes, any child has viewed	29
No, have not	68
Don't know/Refused	4

Q.27a Seeing images like these might have a negative effect on some children, while other children might be ready to see such images. Do you think seeing these images had a negative effect on any of your children, or not?

Q.27b Would you say very negative or somewhat negative?

Think images had a negative effect	8
Very negative	2
Somewhat negative	6
Do not think images had a negative effect	20
Children have not viewed images	68
Don't know	4

THERE IS NO QUESTION 28

Q.29 Now I have a question about public service announcements on issues like the environment, drug abuse, and drunk driving... Some people say all TV stations should be required to devote one minute per hour to public service announcements during prime time. Others say it should be left up to TV stations themselves to decide whether and when to run public service announcements. Do you think TV stations should or should not be required to run public service announcements for one minute per hour in prime time?

Should be required	59
Should not be required	36
Not sure/Refused	5

Q.30 Thinking again about sex and violence on TV... Some people say there should be new regulations to limit the amount of sex and violence in TV shows during the early evening hours, when children are most likely to be watching. Others oppose new regulations, saying the government shouldn't play such a role in determining the content of TV shows and that parents should be responsible for monitoring what their children watch. Do you favor or oppose new limits on TV content?

Favor new limits	63
Oppose new limits	35
Don't know/Refused	2

Q.31 Some people say that because so many families watch cable TV, cable shows should be subject to the same standards as broadcast shows regarding sex, violence, and adult language. Others say that since cable doesn't use the public airwaves and families choose whether or not to subscribe, cable shows should not be subject to the same standards as broadcast shows. Do you think cable shows should or should not be subject to the same standards as broadcast shows?

Should be subject to same standards	52
Should not be subject to same standards	43
Don't know/Refused	5

Q.32 Looking back on the Janet Jackson Super Bowl incident today, how concerned are you about the impact it had on your children? Are you...

Very concerned	17
Somewhat concerned	14
Not too concerned	10
Not at all concerned	43
Doesn't apply (didn't see it/too young)	
(VOL.)	14
Don't know/Refused	2

THERE IS NO QUESTION 33

Q.34 Another topic in the news recently is childhood obesity. Some people say it is time to restrict ads for junk food on children's TV shows. Others oppose such restrictions, saying companies should be free to advertise whatever they want. Do you favor or oppose restricting ads for junk food on children's TV shows?

Favor	37
Oppose	56
Don't know/Refused	7

READ: Now I have some questions about the TV ratings system and how it works. We don't expect you to know all the answers. If you're not sure of something, just say so and I'll go to the next question...

Q.35 The TV ratings system uses different numbers and letters to provide information about a show. Do you happen to know ANY of the specific ratings now being used in rating CHILDREN'S SHOWS, such as Sesame Street and Saturday morning cartoons?

Based on parents of children aged 2-6 years

	Current	6/01	4/99 ⁹	4/98
Yes, correct response (TV-Y, TV-Y7, FV, EI)	14	16	13	22
Yes, partially correct response "TV-G" or "G"	10	16	8	11
Yes, incorrect response	*	1	5	4
No, don't know any	55	51	55	46
Refused	0	1	*	1
Not aware of ratings system	21	15	19	16
	(n=461)	(n=334)	(n=628)	(n=798)

Q.36 One of the specific ratings used for children’s shows is “TV-Y7.” Can you tell me what this means?

Based on parents of children aged 2-6 years

	Current	6/01 ¹⁰	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (directed to older children/ children age 7 and older)	28	43	37	45
Yes, specific incorrect response “directed to children UNDER age 7”	13	10	13	7
Yes, other incorrect response	1	0	1	1
No, don't know	38	31	31	31
Refused	0	1	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	21 (n=461)	15 (n=334)	19 (n=628)	16 (n=798)

Q.37 The letters “FV” as in “Frank Victor” are used to provide information about the CONTENT of a children’s show. Can you tell me what the letters “FV” stand for?

Based on parents of children aged 2-6 years

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (fantasy violence/cartoon violence)	4	8	3	7
Yes, partially correct response (violence with no mention of fantasy or cartoon)	8	6	8	6
Yes, specific incorrect response “family viewing”	8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yes, other incorrect response	*	2	10	5
No, don't know	59	68	60	65
Refused	0	*	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	21 (n=461)	15 (n=334)	19 (n=628)	16 (n=798)

Q.38 The letters “EI” as in “Edward Ivan,” also provide information about the content of a children’s show. Can you tell me what the letters “EI” stand for?

Based on parents of children aged 2-6 years (n=461)

Yes, correct response (educational/informational children’s program)	5
Yes, specific incorrect response “everyone interactive/suitable for children age 6 and older”	1
Yes, other incorrect response	*
No, don't know	73
Refused	0
Not aware of ratings system	21

Q.39 [IF HAVE A CHILD AGED 2-6] Other ratings are used for shows NOT specifically designed for children. Some of the other ratings used are TV-14 and TV-MA. [IF DO NOT HAVE CHILD AGED 2-6] The TV ratings system uses different numbers and letters to provide information about a show. Do you happen to know what the rating... (INSERT-READ AND RANDOMIZE) means?

a. "TV-MA."

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (for mature audiences/adults/ not for children under 18)	54	47	38	41
Yes, incorrect response	*	*	1	*
No, don't know	26	38	42	40
Refused	0	*	0	1
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

b. "TV-14."

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (directed to audiences aged 14 and older/ inappropriate for children under age 14/ may contain intense violence, sexual situations, or adult language)	56	62	60	63
Yes, specific incorrect response "directed to children UNDER age 14"	5	7	3	2
Yes, other incorrect response	1	1	1	2
No, don't know	18	15	17	15
Refused	0	*	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

c. "TV-PG."

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (parental guidance suggested/ may be inappropriate for younger children/may contain some violence, sex, or adult language)	66	74	68	70
Yes, incorrect response	3	2	5	3
No, don't know	11	10	8	9
Refused	0	*	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

Q.40 Now I'm going to read you some different letters the TV ratings system uses to provide information about the CONTENT of a show and ask you if you know what they stand for. Again, if you're not sure of an answer, just say so and I'll go to the next item. One of these letters is... (INSERT-READ AND ROTATE)? Can you tell me what this letter stands for?

a. "D" as in "David"

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response				
(dialogue/suggestive dialogue/sexual dialogue)	4	5	2	2
Yes, specific incorrect response				
(drugs/drug use) ¹¹	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yes, other incorrect response	1	1	5	4
No, don't know	73	79	73	76
Refused	*	*	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

b. "S" as in "Sam"

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response				
(sex/sexual content/sexual situations)	37	52	34	44
Yes, incorrect response	1	1	1	1
No, don't know	42	33	46	37
Refused	0	*	*	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

c. "L" as in "Larry"

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response				
(language/adult language/coarse language/ bad language)	40	50	40	40
Yes, incorrect response	1	*	1	1
No, don't know	39	35	40	41
Refused	0	1	0	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

d. "V" as in "Victor"

	Current	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, correct response (violence/violent content)	51	62	54	55
Yes, incorrect response	*	*	*	1
No, don't know	29	23	27	25
Refused	0	*	0	1
Not aware of ratings system	20	14	19	18

Q.41 Which part of the TV ratings system do you think provides the most useful information for PARENTS LIKE YOU – the part that tells you what AGES a show is appropriate for, such as “TV-Y7” and “TV-14,” or the part that tells you about a show’s CONTENT, such as “S” for sexual content and “V” for violent content?

	Total	<u>Current</u> Ever used ratings	6/01	4/99	9/98	4/98
Age-based ratings	21	28	18	15	7	15
Content-based ratings	47	56	55	40	36	43
Both equally useful (VOL.)	8	13	8	6	10	8
Neither are useful (VOL.) ¹²	2	*	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Don't know/Refused	3	2	2	3	1	*
Not aware of ratings system	20	n/a	14	19	20	18
Never used the ratings system ¹³	n/a	n/a	n/a	17	26	15

Q.42 We’re interested in parents’ opinions about the ACCURACY of the TV ratings system. From what you’ve seen on TV, do you think most shows are being rated in a way that accurately reflects their content, or not?

Based on Form A respondents (n=480)

	Total	<u>Current</u> Ever used ratings	6/01	4/99	4/98
Yes, most rated accurately	40	52	43	38	53
No	32	39	31	27	20
Don't know/Refused	11	9	12	16	9
Not aware of ratings system	17	n/a	14	19	18
		(n=252)			

Q.43 We’re interested in parents’ opinions about the ACCURACY of the TV ratings system. Have you ever personally seen a TV show you thought was rated INaccurately – that is, was given a rating that did NOT seem to reflect the show’s content?

Based on Form B respondents (n=521)

	Total	Ever used ratings
Yes, have seen show rated inaccurately	31	47
No	41	50
Don't know/Refused	5	3
Not aware of ratings system	23	n/a
		(n=250)

Q.44 How often, if ever, do you think TV shows are given ratings that do NOT accurately reflect their content? Do you think this happens...

Based on Form B respondents (n=521)

	Total	Ever used ratings
Most of the time	11	14
Some of the time	32	46
Hardly ever	23	33
Never	2	2
Don't know/Refused	9	5
Not aware of ratings system	23	n/a
		(n=250)

Q.45 As you may know, the TV ratings are displayed in the upper corner of the TV screen for about 10 seconds at the beginning of each show. Some people think the ratings should be displayed more prominently to make it easier for parents to notice them. Others say such a display is not necessary and would make the ratings get in the way too much. Do you think the TV ratings should or should not be displayed more prominently than they are now?

Should be displayed more prominently	55
Should not be displayed more prominently	39
Don't know/Refused	6

Q.46 Now I have a few questions about the TVs in your home... As far as you know, do any of your televisions have a V-Chip that allows you to use parental controls to block shows with certain ratings?

	Current	6/01
Yes, have TV with a V-Chip	35	19
Bought TV since 1/00, but not aware it has a V-Chip	39	21
Did not purchase a new TV since 1/00	26	60

Q.47 Have you or another adult in your household ever programmed your V-Chip to block shows you don't want your children to watch?

	Current	6/01
Yes, have used V-Chip	15	7
No, have not used V-Chip/Not sure	20	12
Not aware TV has a V-Chip	39	21
Did not purchase a new TV since 1/00	26	60

Among parents who are aware they have a V-Chip

	Current	6/01
Yes, have used V-Chip	42	36
No, have not used V-Chip/Not sure	58	64

(n=346)

Q.47 Have you or another adult in your household ever programmed your V-Chip to block shows you don't want your children to watch?

	Current	6/01
Yes, have used V-Chip	15	7
No, have not used V-Chip/Not sure	20	12
Not aware TV has a V-Chip	39	21
Did not purchase a new TV since 1/00	26	60

Among parents who are aware they have a V-Chip

	Current	6/01
Yes, have used V-Chip	42	36
No, have not used V-Chip/Not sure	58	64

(n=346)

Q.48 How USEFUL has the V-Chip been for you in blocking shows you don't want your children to watch? Has it been...

Based on parents who have ever used V-chip (n=175)

	Current	6/01
Very useful	64	63
Somewhat useful	27	23
Not too useful	6	5
Not at all useful	3	6
Don't know/Refused	1	2
		(n=53)

THERE IS NO QUESTION 49 OR 50

Q.51 Which of the following is the MAIN reason you've never programmed your V-chip.

Based on parents who have V-Chip, but never used it (n=243)

An adult is usually nearby when your children watch TV	60
You trust your children to make their own decisions	20
Don't know how to program it	4
It would block shows YOU want to watch	3
It seems too time-consuming to program	2
Your children would find ways around it	2
Other reason (VOL.)	6
Don't know/Refused	3

Q.52 If you could use a V-Chip to help you seek out and find programs that have been rated as "educational" for kids, would you be more likely to use a V-Chip, or would it not make much difference?

Based on parents with children aged 2-13 (n=809)

Would be more likely to use V-Chip	40
Would not make much difference	57
Don't know/Refused	3
Do not have TV/DK	1

Demographics:

D1. Record sex of parent:

Female (Mother)	57
Male (Father)	43

S2. Thinking about your own family situation, how many children UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE now live in your household?

One or more children under age 2	20
No children under age 2	80

D2. Can you please tell me the EXACT age of your child who is between the ages of 2 to 17?

D3. Are any of your children now living with you... (READ FIRST ITEM)? Are any of them (READ ITEMS b AND c IN ORDER)?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref.
a. Between 2 to 6 years of age	46	53	1
b. Between 7 to 13 years of age	56	43	1
c. Between 14 to 17 years of age	40	59	1

D4. Now I have just a few questions so that we can describe the parents who took part in our survey... Are you NOW employed full-time, part-time, are you retired, or are you not employed for pay?

Full-time	65
Part-time	10
Retired	3
Not employed	15
Homemaker (VOL.)	5
Student (VOL.)	*
Disabled (VOL.)	1
Don't know/Refused	1

D5. Are you married, LIVING as married, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?

Married	77
Living as married	4
Divorced	7
Separated	2
Widowed	1
Never married/Single	7
Don't know	*
Refused	1

D6. Is your husband/wife or partner NOW employed full-time, part-time, retired, or not employed for pay?

Based on those who are married/living as married (n=712)

Full-time	73
Part-time	11
Retired	2
Not employed	10
Homemaker (VOL.)	4
Student (VOL.)	*
Disabled (VOL.)	1
Don't know/Refused	*

D7. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school?

None, or grade 1-8	4
High school incomplete (grades 9-11)	7
High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)	31
Technical, trade or vocational school AFTER high school	4
Some college, no four-year degree (includes associate degree)	23
College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other four-year degree)	19
Post-graduate or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a Master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)	11
Don't know	0
Refused	1

D8. What is your age?

18-29	15
30-39	36
40+	47
Refused	2

D9. Last year, in 2003, what was your TOTAL household income from all sources, BEFORE taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

Less than \$10,000	5
Between \$10,000 and \$20,000	9
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	10
Between \$30,000 and \$50,000	17
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	19
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000	12
\$100,000 or more	13
Don't know	4
Refused	11

D10. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Latin American background?

D11. What is your race? Are you White, Black, Asian, or some other race?

White, non-Hispanic	66
Total Non-White	32
Black/African-American	11
Hispanic	16
Asian	2
Other or mixed race	3
Undesignated	2
Region	
Northeast	19
Midwest	23
South	35
West	23
Community Size	
Urban	27
Suburban	51
Rural	22

END INTERVIEW

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Parents and the V-Chip*, 2001, July 2001.

² Kaiser Family Foundation, *V-Chip Study 2000*, April 2000.

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Parents and the V-Chip*, May 1999.

⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation, *TV Ratings Update Survey*, September 1998.

⁵ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Parents, Children and the Television Ratings System*, May 1998.

⁶ Trend wording read "The parental advisories on video and computer games."

⁷ Trend wording read "The parental advisories on video and computer games."

⁸ In 2001, a related question asked: "Some people say the current ratings systems and parental advisories should be replaced by a SINGLE ratings system for ALL entertainment media including TV shows, movies, video games, and music. Would a single ratings system be more useful or less useful to you as a parent – or wouldn't it make much difference?" 40% of parents said a single ratings system would be more useful, 17% said less useful, and 38% said it wouldn't make much difference.

⁹ 4/99 and 4/98 trend figures for Q.35 through Q.37 are based on parents of children aged 2 to 9.

¹⁰ 6/01, 4/99, and 4/98 surveys included a question asking respondents about the rating "TV-Y" immediately before this question.

¹¹ This response category received specific mentions only in the current survey.

¹² This response category was not included in the 4/98 to 4/99 trend questions.

¹³ In current and 2001 surveys, this question was asked of all parents aware of the TV ratings system, including those who have never used it to make decisions about what their children will watch.



Methodology

Parents, Media and Public Policy is a nationally representative, random digit dial telephone survey of 1,001 parents of children ages 2-17. The survey was designed and analyzed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation in consultation with Princeton Survey Research Associates. Interviews were conducted in

English and Spanish by Braun Research, Inc. from July 12 to August 3, 2004. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is $\pm 3.6\%$. For results based on subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

List of TV Ratings

	TV-Y: All children. This program is designed to be appropriate for all children.
	TV-Y7: Directed to older children. This program is designed for children age 7 and above.
	TV-Y7-FV: Directed to older children – fantasy violence. For those programs where fantasy violence may be more intense or more combative than other programs in the Y7 category.
	TV-G: General audience. Most parents would find this program appropriate for all ages.
	TV-PG: Parental guidance suggested. This program contains material that parents may find unsuitable for younger children.
	TV-14: Parents strongly cautioned. This program contains some material that parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age.
	TV-MA: Mature audience only. This program is specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17.

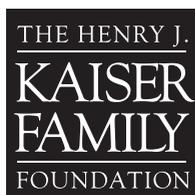
V: Violence

S: Sexual situations

L: Coarse language

D: Suggestive dialogue

EI: Educational/informational



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