



Tips on

Using Media

Using media in active ways helps prepare children to interact with the content they see and hear. Media can extend children's learning, especially when the lessons are reinforced with follow-up activities. Here are some steps to help you get organized as you integrate media into what you are teaching.

Teaching with Media

- ✓ **Decide what you want to teach.** Then use the information on program topics, available through your PBS station or online at www.pbs.org to plan off-air taping or find videos, websites, or software that can help with your lesson.
- ✓ **Plan ahead.** Preview a program before sharing it with children so you can select the part(s) of a show or game you want to highlight and prepare questions to ask during screen time.
- ✓ **Plan related follow-up activities.** Act out scenes, draw pictures, play games, or sing songs that build on what the children have learned.
- ✓ **Find related books** and schedule a time to read those books aloud.
- ✓ **Prepare the children.** When you are ready to play a tape or use the computer, tell the children what they can expect or what you want them to do. Mention some of the things the characters may be doing.
- ✓ **Set time limits.** The deepest learning happens when children learn with all of their senses, so alternate between screen time and activities that give children an opportunity to touch and manipulate objects, move their bodies, and shift the focus of their eyes.
- ✓ **Take advantage of teachable moments.** A mini-library of programs on issues or topics that are likely to come up during the course of the year can be a handy resource to help you and your children enhance your curriculum goals.
- ✓ **Incorporate media at your convenience.** Try not to be restricted by a broadcast schedule; if you want to wait until the littlest ones are napping, or spend extra time outside on a beautiful day, videotapes and DVD's allow you to do so without missing anything.



Using Television, Videos, Or Dvds

- ✓ **Show children,** by the way you act, that it is fine to sing, clap, dance, or play along with what they see.
- ✓ **Help children identify** shapes, colors, and numbers by repeating them along with the show. Encourage everyone to join in and react to what they see.
- ✓ **Have children explore feelings** by identifying emotions and naming what the characters are experiencing. For example, in *Dragon Tales*, they might notice, "Cassie is crying. She must be sad because ..." Help them to recall their own experiences and relate them to what they see on the show.
- ✓ **Respond to children's questions** about things that are happening onscreen and help them understand concepts like cooperation and feelings by talking about the situations and characters they have seen.
- ✓ **Practice sequencing** by asking children to re-tell a story they have seen or to identify what happened in the beginning, middle, and end.
- ✓ **Increase learning through repetition.** Just as children love reading favorite books over and over again, they love re-running videos and computer games. With each repetition they are building on what they have learned.
- ✓ **With videos and DVD's, you can create an interactive experience** by using the pause button. Involve children by pausing the program and encouraging them to guess what will happen next. (Keep in mind that too much stopping and starting may make it difficult for preschoolers to follow a story line unless they have seen the program before). You can also use the rewind feature to practice listening skills and let children check the program to see if their memory is accurate.

While You View

- ✓ **Media can be an effective teacher.** Children learn from what they see on screen, whether it is a violent program or an educational program. You can help them get the most from on screen by steering them towards age appropriate, educational programs, and using related activities to enhance children's learning experiences.
- ✓ **The activities you choose should reinforce program themes and lessons,** help children appreciate differences and similarities (racial, ethnic, lifestyle, gender, cultural, physical, language, family groups, abilities), and include a variety of materials to encourage creative expression. Viewing, doing, and reading can happen in any order. The key is to use words to remind children of the links (e.g., "Remember what Ord did this morning when he was afraid? Now let's see what people in this story do when they are afraid.")

Adapted from the educational resource Learn and Grow with Sesame Workshop: From Language to Literacy. Courtesy of Sesame Workshop. You can purchase copies of the full text in English or Spanish as well as similar resources at: <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/educationalresources>

To learn more, watch *A Place of Our Own* on your local public television station and visit the website at www.aplaceofourown.org



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