

Pointers For Parents

Turn Viewing into a Teachable Moment by Watching Together

by Dr. Rosemarie Truglio

(NAPSA)—A new national study shows how television has become a central focus of many very young children's lives. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? That depends on how parents approach it. The following questions and answers may help you decide:

Q: How much television do children watch?

A: According to the study released by the Kaiser Family Foundation, in a typical day more than eight in 10 children under the age of 6 use screen media, with those children averaging about two hours a day.

Q: How is TV used in most homes?

A: In many homes, electronic media are used to help manage busy schedules, keep the peace and facilitate family routines such as eating, relaxing and falling asleep. TV can also be used to educate. Thirty-seven years ago, Sesame Workshop changed the history of television with "Sesame Street," proving educational television can be a positive learning tool for preschoolers.

Now, the nonprofit educational organization behind the show has developed a new line of DVDs called Sesame Beginnings. It's designed to encourage interaction between caregivers and children, as well as to provide ideas, songs and activities that caregivers can use to promote "teachable moments."

Q. Why focus on infants and their caregivers?

A. As the recent study found, millions of children under the age of 2 are watching TV and videos. Sesame Workshop's own research has found that "Sesame Street" videos were among those frequently viewed by children under



DVDs FOR THE UNDER 2 SET—In a typical day, studies show that more than eight in 10 children under the age of 6 watch television.

2. However, the content and curriculum of "Sesame Street" is designed for ages 2-5. Therefore, the DVDs were created to provide video content for families with younger children—with the goal to model and foster parent-child interaction during viewing and, most importantly, when the video is over.

Q. Are the DVDs designed to promote infant TV/video viewing?

A. No. The purpose of developing these DVDs is to offer parents—who do choose to allow their children to watch TV/video—content that is developmentally appropriate for children under 2 and that reinforces important research-based principles that young children learn best through adult-child interaction. *Dr. Truglio is Vice President of Education & Research at Sesame Workshop.*