

# PULL THE PLUG ON "SCREEN MEDIA" VIOLENCE



**What are "screen media"?** TV, VCR, DVD, game boys, play station and other similar games, e-mail devices

## **Why take "screen media" violence seriously?**

- "screen media" violence can, and does, lead to real-life violence
- "screen media" violence is frequently painless and sometimes even funny. Real life violence is painful and causes much sadness.

## **Facts:**

- 3-4 hours of non educational "screen media" can result in your child seeing as many as 8,000 murders before they enter 6th grade!
- In "screen media" often problems are solved in a violent way rather than in the nonviolent ways that our children need to learn to be successful adults.
- Children under 7 years old are not able to tell imaginary from real very well. So when they watch "screen media", they imitate the behaviors that they see there and have trouble understanding why we don't accept these behaviors. Many times this results in family arguments and angry words.
- Children learn from the **actions** of those people around them, seldom from our words.
- Some bad habits children learn from "screen media" are:
  - Fighting
  - To become victims
  - It is fun to watch friends fight
  - Use bad words
  - Use unacceptable body movements
  - What others can you think of?
  - Not to concentrate on something unless it is loud and very stimulating

## **What can you do?**

- **You can** reduce your child's exposure to "screen media" violence
- Limit "screen media" (TV, VCR, DVD, games, etc) to no more than 1 or 2 hours per day (American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation)
- Get your child a library card (it's free!) and take them there every week to get 7 books, one for each day of the week
- Use puzzles, crafts, drawing, board games, age appropriate educational toys
- Talk about and show feelings ("I'm really sad that \_\_ died. Sometimes I cry. You can cry too.") ("I feel really good when you treat me that way.")
- Use a Vchip on your TV - This device lets you identify and stop programs with violence, sexual content, or other material not suitable for your child. The website is [www.fcc.gov/vchip](http://www.fcc.gov/vchip). Phone numbers for the FCC for information are Phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) Fax: 1-866-418-0232.
- Watch programs with your child. If violence appears ask "thinking" questions such as: Is this real or pretend?, Is there a better way to solve this problem? What would happen if you did that?
- Keep "screen media" out of your child's bedroom. Recent research tells us that "screen media" interfere with our sleep patterns (yes, grown-ups too!). Create a family place for "screen media" viewing where you know what your child is watching and shared conversations can take place.