

Learning Links

Helping parents, caregivers, and early childhood professionals make the link between media and learning

Advice From:  **PBSparents**

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GROWING WITH MEDIA

Get your child thinking and creating with TV, computers and other media

We've just started introducing educational TV and videos to our 2-year-old twins. My son will only watch for 15 minutes before he wants to go play, but my daughter becomes transfixed almost immediately. Are we developing a habit that will be hard to break later on? They only watch about 20-30 minutes at a time, and it's not usually every day. In fact, their preference is to read books with us.

- Lisa, Norman, OK

Early TV Habits

- **Watch TV when your child does and talk about what you see.**
Make eye contact with your child, turning to look at him when you repeat something you've heard in a program or comment on something you've seen. Your voice is more important than a character's because you have the ability to connect and make a conversation real for your child.
- **Keep your child moving.**
Get your child exploring his environment by keeping TV time limited. Also, use musical aspects of a show or a character's physical feats to encourage your child to dance, jump and clap rather than just watch.
- **Know that repetition is a part of learning.**
Though you may tire of hearing the same phrase or watching the same episode, your child is most likely mastering the pattern of a sound or scene as she watches it over and over again.
- **Be selective about the TV shows you and your child watch.**
What children take away from TV can have a lot to do with what they are watching, so be choosy. Read online and print reviews of shows, looking for ones appropriate for your child's age and stage of development.
- **Keep TV from becoming just part of the background.**
Rather than letting one show blend into the next, turn off the set when a specific program you have selected is over. Consider making a routine that your child can learn, like closing the TV cabinet or covering the TV with a cloth.



Using American Sign Language (ASL), D.W. signs "Hello!" and Buster signs, "Join in!"

American Sign Language (ASL) is a language. Just like English or Spanish, it has a grammar system, but in ASL grammar, the rules involve the way you use space (the air in front of you), how you move your hands, and how you use facial expressions to convey meaning.

Spotlight on

Arthur's Communication Adventure

Much of the attention in the media surrounding kids with disabilities focuses on the kids themselves and the challenges they face with the world around them. But what about the kids that don't have disabilities? How can children better understand others who may seem different at first, but really are more like them than they realize?

The ARTHUR Web team created a series of new interactive games that help kids explore this issue.

About Face - pbskids.org/arthur/games/aboutface: Arthur tells a story, and kids help Pal choose the facial expression that best describes how ARTHUR characters would feel in given situations. The game is designed to enforce the idea that facial expressions communicate information.

You've Got Braille - <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/braille>: Kids can create coded braille messages to keep or pass on to friends.

Fern, The Effective Detective: In this feature, kids hone their observation skills and learn the benefits of using descriptive language, both of which are important, especially when communicating with someone who is blind or visually impaired.

Sign Design - <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/signdesign>: This feature gives kids the tools to learn some basic finger spelling and signing skills through demonstration and application.

The complete educator and parents' guide to Arthur's Communication Adventure is on the web at: www.pbskids.org/arthur/grownups/teacherguides/communication.