

Be a better parent. Be a better citizen. Be a smarter shopper.

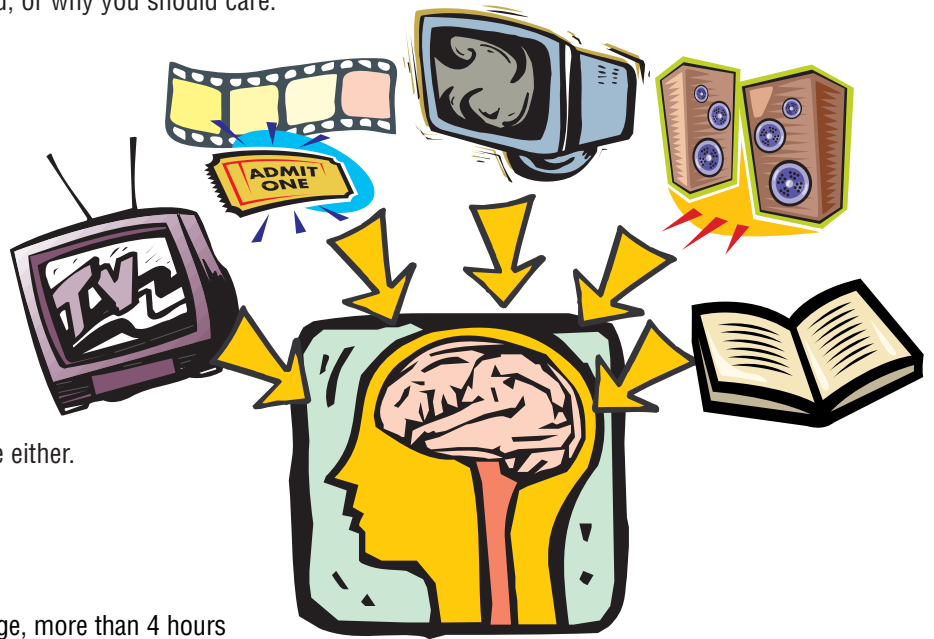
Did we get your attention? Think about how we did that.

You probably have no idea how the media grabs you, or why you should care.

You should.

Media literacy matters. It can help you be a better parent, citizen and shopper.

Media literate people understand what's behind the messages, symbols and emotional appeals bombarding us from television sets, movie screens, video games, the Internet, magazines, newspapers, billboards, radio and even shopping carts. Children are particularly vulnerable, but adults aren't immune either.



Did you know:

- Kids between the ages of 2 and 17 spend, on average, more than 4 hours per day in front of a television or computer screen.
- The average American child views more than 20,000 commercials per year.
- Research shows excessive exposure to violence can lead to behavioral problems such as increased bullying.
- Pre-teens and teen-agers listen to music between 3 and 4 hours per day.
- Most television advertising is aimed at your emotions, frame by frame. It's designed to get you to make a purchasing or political decision without logic.
- By the time an average child reaches elementary school, he or she will see 8,000 television murders and more than 100,000 other violent acts. Many of those programs will not send the message that violence rarely solves problems and always has consequences. By the way, did you know that most real-life police officers rarely, if ever, fire their weapons during their entire careers?
- The three most heavily advertised cigarette brands are smoked by 90 percent of all kids who smoke.

There are things you can do. Ask local school officials to teach media literacy. Call the Healthy York County Coalition at (717) 851-2333. They'll send you material, including "The Other TV Guide," a guide to healthy viewing for the family. Go to the Web at www.healthyork.org. Click on "task forces" and then click on "media literacy."

Right now, there are people in York County who are working to make media literacy come alive. But if you want to be a better parent, better citizen and a smarter shopper, you need to be involved, too.

Brought to you by the Healthy York County Coalition