

Dear parents and carers

There has been great excitement back at school sites the last two weeks, with teachers and their classes being reunited, and it has been wonderful to watch virtual hugs; high 5's and fist pumps. We are looking forward to getting our fabulous year 5 and 6 students back next week and reconnecting with them.

And while the transition back to school is progressing smoothly, it is going to be a while though before we transition from our living rooms where many of us are spending a lot more time watching TV. For some parents this time at home has provided families with unexpected opportunities for meaningful conversations.

Watching TV and movies is not only an entertaining activity, which allows children an opportunity to learn important lessons, but co-viewing with your child can also be a fun bonding activity and at times an opportunity to reinforce your values and counteract any negative messages. Whether it is a once off TV show; a series or a movie, there are endless possibilities. You are able to bling it up or down with ideas from <https://www.parentmap.com/article/family-movie-night-ideas>, and be guided in what is appropriate for your family by following advice from <https://www.common sense media.org>

While I am a personal fan of documentaries (Planet Earth; anything Attenborough; Expedition Happiness etc) for those who enjoy features, <https://afineparent.com/building-character/best-family-movies.html#more> divides their choice of great family movies into G; PG and PG 13 and pairs them with a synopsis of character traits covered.

As our children grow up (and movies appropriate for their age change), there is typically a lot more action and interpersonal conflict in films, although many TV shows targeted at this age portray positive resolutions. The age 5 – 8 group is a great time to have children become more media savvy and asking them to relate what they see to their own experiences helps the positive lessons sink in. Questions for this group could be around:



- How did the characters work out their problem?
- Did the characters do something you wish you could do?
- Who were your favourite characters, and why?
- What made the show more exciting/scary/funny?

In the 9 – 11 year old age group, our questions change as children are increasingly more curious about the outside world, and how people relate to each other. Curious questions to ask here may include:

- What was the consequence for that character's behaviour?
- Can you tell that the show is edited? What are the clues?
- What makes that character appealing? Or not?
- Did anything in this show surprise you or teach you something you didn't know?
- Does this show intend to teach something or get a certain message across?

Co-watching movies can become more complex with the 12 year old+ group, where there is interest in testing limits, and discussions about why films are off limits may be the first step. Even controversial programs can however be an opportunity to initiate conversations and get insight into your tween/teen's social life and inner thoughts.

Possible questions here may be around whether the portrayed situation seemed realistic?; real-life possible consequences for acting in that way; whether the show used stereotypes and for those families hooked on reality shows, what participants stand to gain or lose by appearing on the show?

Looking forward to connecting with our new returning students next week and wishing you all the best.

Warm regards

Michelle (Turner School Psychologist)