

A Tip from the PTA

Family media strategies from the PTA



Putting the Parent in Parental Controls

A recent news story about a child who ran up a \$5,000 cell phone bill by sending 20,000 text messages in a single month serves as a reminder that parents have to be proactive in managing their children's use of media and technology. Most devices, from TVs to computers to video game consoles to mobile phones, come with parental controls. Many service providers offer additional layers of protection and control. But beyond the technology, it's important your children know your rules and expectations. How many messages can they send or how long can they play the video game? What are the appropriate times for being on the computer or watching TV? How should they behave and treat others when online or on the phone?

Using appropriate parental controls and setting clear ground rules are two key steps in helping your family be media smart! For more ideas and information on kids and media, visit PTA's [Media Safety](#) or Cable in the Classroom's [Media Smart for Parents](#).

Family-Friendly Cable Programs in May

Cable in the Classroom presents a sampling of entertaining TV programs for family viewing



Jonas (Disney Channel)

May 2 at 8:00 PM ET/PT

Got a Jonas Brothers fan in the house? Then check out this premiere episode of the Jonas Brothers' new series. Nick writes a love song for a girl he's just met despite warnings from Kevin and Joe that he's moving too fast with this brand-new crush. TV-G.



Nature's Most Amazing Events (Discovery Channel)

May 29 at 8:00 PM ET/PT

Explore unique natural phenomena across the globe that are dictated by shifts in seasons, climate changes, and powerful storms with this new Discovery Channel series. Locations and events filmed include the flooding of the Okavango Delta in Africa, the summer melt of ice in the Arctic, and the massive annual bloom of plankton in the northern Pacific Ocean. TV-PG.



Meteorite Men (Science Channel)

May 10 at 9:00 PM ET

Geoff and Steve (pictured) hunt space rocks as a team, and in this new series they cover hundreds of acres of ground in plowed fields, forests, rolling hillsides, abandoned farms, unmarked dirt roads, and howling Kansas winds to hunt for the valuable and mysterious rocks. TV-G.

Night: Migration (Animal Planet)

May 20 at 10:00 PM ET/PT

In this episode of the Animal Planet series that takes viewers into the darkness to experience the wonder of nocturnal nature and all its animal activities, host Brandon travels to Africa to witness the Great Migration and explore how wildebeest herds survive at night. TV-PG.

Geo Bee 2009 (National Geographic Channel)

May 20 at 5:00 PM ET/PT

Hosted by Alex Trebek, this annual live competition at the National Geographic Society headquarters pits young geography brainiacs against each other for the chance to win a \$25,000 scholarship. TV-G.



Olivia (Nickelodeon)

May 8 at 11:30 AM ET/PT

In two Mother's Day-themed episodes, Olivia (pictured) plans a special surprise dinner for her mother and imagines herself to be a famous chef, then pretends to be a mom after seeing all the attention her own mother gets due to her baby brother. TV-Y7.

Extreme Trains: Overnight Traveler (History)

May 3 at 10:00 AM ET/PT

This episode of *Extreme Trains* follows the Amtrak Empire Builder, which runs from Chicago to Seattle and is the busiest passenger train in America, and explores how the Great Northern Railroad was built. TV-PG.

Greensburg (Planet Green)

Sundays at 10:00 PM ET

All-new episodes of this Planet Green series follow the re-birth of a rural town in middle America from one that was destroyed by a tornado in 2007 into an environmental and ecological model for the future. TV-PG.

For more family-friendly programs, plus information on using parental controls to block out inappropriate content, go to ControlYourTV.org.

Cable on the Web

CIC presents a sampling of family-friendly websites

Life After People (www.history.com/content/life_after_people)

This companion website to the History series explores what life on Earth would be like if there were no more humans. The website includes videos, a timeline puzzle, information about the show, and more.

Kip Kay's Make Your Own Projects (science.discovery.com/brink/kip-kay/kip-kay.html)

Kip Kay is the resident MacGyver on Science Channel's series *Brink*. On this companion website, Kip instructs viewers on how to make a lie detector, an air horn, spy glasses, and rocket-powered toy cars.

Note: PTA does not endorse any television programs or websites and is not responsible for the selections in this newsletter or the content in those selections. All programs and websites are selected independently according to criteria established by Cable in the Classroom, the cable industry's education foundation. For information about these criteria, go to www.ciconline.org/parents.

Some networks may not be available in your area. Check your local listings.

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