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Contact: Emily Pappas
(202) 570-7776
tvomb@tvguidelines.org

New Study Reports High Usage and Favorable Views of TV Parental Guidelines
As screen time increases, satisfaction with accuracy of TV ratings remains nearly unanimous

Washington, DC – A [recent survey](#) about the TV Parental Guidelines (i.e., the TV ratings system) revealed that usage and positive sentiment toward the TV ratings system remains high as parents report their children are watching more TV amid the pandemic. More than three-fifths of parents surveyed state that their children are spending more time watching broadcast and cable TV shows, and 95 percent of parents said they are satisfied with the accuracy of the TV ratings. More parents (fully 80 percent) have a favorable opinion of the ratings system – four points above the 2018 findings and the highest level ever measured in a TV Parental Guidelines survey.

Among topline results, the survey found that:

- Children are spending more time watching TV shows (64 percent), movies (61 percent), and videos shared online (61 percent) than they were before the pandemic.
- 95 percent of parents are satisfied with the accuracy of the ratings for TV shows on broadcast and cable television, including more than half who are very satisfied.
- Four in five parents (80 percent) maintain a favorable opinion of the TV ratings system – up from 76 percent in 2018.
- 90 percent of parents understand the TV ratings system.
- Nearly nine in 10 parents (89 percent) find the TV ratings system helpful.
- More than three in four parents (77 percent) report using the TV ratings often or sometimes.
- Nearly nine in 10 parents (88 percent) are aware that the TV ratings provide guidance based on a child's age.

“The results of this study indicate that parents continue to depend on the TV ratings system as a source of information about the content and age-appropriateness of TV programs, especially as their children are consuming more TV programming during the pandemic,” said Michael Powell, chairman of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board and President and CEO of NCTA – The Internet & Television Association. “This study underscores the continued value that the TV Parental Guidelines bring to parents who are looking to make more informed decisions about what programming their kids are watching on television.”

The national online survey was conducted by Hart Research Associates on behalf of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board from late August to early September 2020. Respondents included 1,020 parents of children age two to 17. The survey is a follow-up to online surveys conducted in 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2018, and is part of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board’s ongoing tracking of American parents’ awareness, usage and feelings toward TV ratings.

In addition to finding ongoing parental satisfaction with the TV ratings system, the 2020 survey found usage of TV ratings varies by age of children and race/ethnicity of the parent. Parents of elementary- and middle-school-aged children report the highest levels of TV ratings usage: 84 percent of parents with six- to 10-year-olds and 86 percent among parents with 11- to 12-year-olds. This can be compared to 81 percent usage among parents with children under six, 77 percent usage among those with 13- to 15-year-olds, and 57 percent usage among parents with older teens age 16 or 17. Hispanic parents (82 percent) and Black parents (79 percent) use the ratings more than White parents (75 percent).

The 2020 TV Parental Guidelines survey results can be found [here](#).

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About the TV Parental Guidelines

The TV Parental Guidelines were created in 1996 to help parents monitor and control what their children watch on the increasing number of TV channels available in American homes each day. Designed by leading organizations of the TV industry to give parents more information about the age-appropriateness and content of TV programs, the Guidelines, modeled after the familiar movie ratings, are easily recognizable and easy to use. They apply to most television programs, including those geared towards young children. The TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board is responsible for overseeing the TV Parental Guidelines and for ensuring uniformity and consistency in the application of the Guidelines. The Board is comprised of 24 members from the broadcast and cable television industries, as well as the program production and public interest communities. The Board of Directors consists of the chief executive officers of the Motion Picture Association (MPA), NCTA – The Internet & Television Association, and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). For more information, please visit www.tvguidelines.org.