Good news! ACCM movie and app reviews can now be accessed with a free app!

Download it now from Apple App Store and Google Play, and check out our Know Before You Go movie Reviews and our Know Before You Load app reviews.

The Know Before You Go movie review service provides descriptions of content of movies, highlighting areas which may be of concern to parents. Qualified child development professionals review all G and PG movies as soon as possible after their release in Australia. Selected M movies which may appeal to younger audiences are also reviewed. They are designed to help parents and carers find age appropriate and enjoyable movies suitable for children of all ages.

Likewise, the Know Before You Load App review service provides descriptions of an app’s features and highlights areas which may be of concern to parents, including identifying simulated gambling content.

Both sets of reviews can be found on ACCM’s website at www.childrenandmedia.org.au

Now we are two!

Know Before You Load, ACCM’s app review service turns two this month.

Funded by the Attorney General of South Australia, the service was launched in April 2014. It aims to review apps that are the most popular with children, and to signal any content that is problematic. It incorporates a Children and Gambling watchlist. It also includes some short videos and fact sheets to help parents negotiate the traps with apps.

Coordinator Kathy Frith says “Parents need to watch out for in-app purchas-
The plain parents’ guide to the new Commercial TV Industry Code

We should have published this piece on 1 April: that would have been fitting because we don’t think a simple guide in plain language is possible.

Parents are finding it difficult to ascertain just what they can expect at different times of the day and in different types of programs, since the new free-to-air-TV Code came into force on 1 December 2015.

In this editorial, we thought we’d try to provide a simple story about alcohol and betting ads so you can know when to expect, and perhaps avoid them, in your family viewing.

Alcohol ads: these can be shown in any program after 8.30pm. But they are permitted at any time in sports programs and live sporting events which are shown between 6pm on Fridays through to midnight on Sundays, and also on public holidays. We haven’t yet worked out the logic of that, but perhaps it’s got to do with the well known healthy relationship between consumption of alcohol and sport? [what’s that in my cheek?]

Betting ads: things get a bit more complicated here. Betting ads can be shown any time in news, current affairs or sports programs; in PG program at any time. The only time they can’t be shown, is if they are in a G program (or C or P) between 6 and 8.30am or between 4 and 7pm. They also can’t be shown between 5am and 8.30pm in a program “principally directed to children”.

Now what does “principally directed to children” mean? Well, this version of the Code, seems not to contain a definition, nor even an Advisory Note, though previous versions of the Code had had sections to help decide whether ads are directed to children. So seemingly it’s up to the TV licensee to decide whether he’s directing the program principally to children , or perhaps to families. The range of programs “principally directed to children” is unlikely to be large.

So there you have it- as simple as we could make it. But we’re not sure it will help you avoid such ads. You could try the ABC, or DVDs.

In later issues of small screen, we’ll tackle the program promo and trailer provisions. Very tricky!!

National Families Week 2016

National Families Week is Australia’s annual celebration of the importance of families. It is timed to coincide with the UN International Day of Families (15 May). The 14th National Families Week will be held between 15 and 21 May 2016. This year’s theme is ‘Stronger Families, Stronger Communities’. The aim of National Families Week 2016 is to celebrate the vital role that families play in community wellbeing. One of ACCM’s contributions to this week is the running of two seminars:

Technology and children: must-knows from the experts

These will be held on 16th May 2016 at the Senior School Auditorium, Tyndale Christian School, 50 Fern Grove Boulevard, Salisbury East SA.

Join us as we hear from the experts:

- Dr Kate Highfield - Nationally recognised expert on how technology can be used as a tool in learning and play
- Ben Riley - Cognitive Behaviour Therapist; Researcher on gambling-related digital media

4:00pm-5:30pm: Professional Development

- How to use devices in an integrated way
- How to think about a world that is becoming increasingly digital
- How to let students share their expertise without teachers feeling threatened
- Awareness of potential issues

7:00-8:30pm: Parents/Carer Session

- Being a step ahead of our children
- Understanding the links between games and gambling
- Being clued in about devices
- Encouraging children to be smart users

More information and registration: childrenandmedia.org.au/events/accm-seminars

The same experts will also be speaking at the full-day Technology, Children and Families symposium at Salvation Army, Ingle Farm, SA on Tuesday 17 May 2016.

More information about this symposium: salisbury4c.org.au/currentconference.php
One in four kids lacks skills to learn to read

Five-year-olds Kirin Law, left, Sophie Gilles, Beau Quinn and Sarah McMurray, and four-year-old Fraser Duck decoding at Glencoe Public School

NATASHA BITA
EDUCATION EDITOR

One million Australian students struggle to read because of poor teaching techniques in primary school and a failure to read books at home, a new study warns.

The Centre for Independent Studies says one in four children starts school without the phonetic skills or vocabulary needed to learn to read.

"After thousands of hours of literacy teaching, around one in four Australian children is unable to read at a basic level," the CIS says in its Read About It report.

We have a million students at serious risk increased education spending has little effect on literacy and numeracy levels in the student population."

CIS education research fellow Jennifer Buckingham will launch the Five From Five literacy project next week to promote phonics-based teaching of reading.

Dr Buckingham said children who failed to read fluently by the end of Year 3 would struggle to catch up — and to read.

"Reading to a child is important because it exposes them to vocabulary and knowledge they might not pick up in their day-to-day lives," she said.

"Verbal interaction is important because children have questions responded to in real time and there's a correction of pronunciation and grammar."

"Time spent on passive devices such as iPads, computer screens or TV means less time spent talking to adults and other children, or reading, which is much more likely to build language capacity."

Dr Buckingham said research showed only 5 per cent of children learned to read naturally, while 60 per cent found it difficult. She said students needed "explicit instruction" in phonemic awareness — the ability to hear and identify individual letter sounds in spoken words — and fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

The CIS report says some teachers still encourage students to guess new words.

"Guessing is a hallmark of poor readers," it says. "Phonics is essential for struggling readers, as well as students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, students with intellectual disabilities, and students for whom English is not their first language."

The report says children in families whose parents work in a profession have heard 30 million words by the age of three, twice as many as those in poorer families.

It says a typical school-age child learns about 3000 words a year, and Year 12 students need to know more than 100,000 words to understand their textbooks.

Former teacher Kate Campbell-Harmon recalls that when she asked some kindergarten kids to recite Jack and Jill, they looked at her blankly. "We're not reading children nursery rhymes any more," she said yesterday. "Teaching children about rhyme and listening to sounds is important to help them learn."

Mr Campbell-Harmon teaches at Glencoe Public School, on the rural outskirts of Sydney, where the Year 5 students are close to the national average for reading and above-average in writing, grammar and punctuation. All students are taught to "decode" words by looking at the letters.

The national curriculum was changed this year to promote phonics-based instruction.

INQUIRER P17

Weekend Australian 5-6 March 2016

REBECCA PUDY

Children's toys should be subject to plain-packaging laws similar to cigarettes, an international women's group says.

In a submission to the domestic violence and gender inequality Senate inquiry, the Adelaide branch of Zonta International says some toys teach girls to be sexy and submissive and boys to be macho and dominant.

"Sexualisation of young children through products, dress, toys and cosmetics reinforces that girls should be sexy, submissive, and boys should be dominant, macho, important and strong," it says.

"These products reinforce boys to grow to males that can be powerful and strong, and that girls need to be attractive and submissive to males. (W)e suggest making a campaign like the successful plain packaging of cigarettes."

Institute of Public Affairs policy director Simon Breheny said mandatory plain packaging of children's toys was "one of the weakest and dumbest policy ideas" he had encountered.

"Suggesting an association between children's toys and domestic violence is illogical," Mr Breheny said. "Drawing such a long bow trivialises the issue of domestic violence and deflects responsibility away from perpetrators."

It was evidence of a disturbing trend towards bureaucracies making decisions about how children should be raised. "Parents should have the right to make decisions about the values their children are instilled with, including whether they give their children an Action Man figurine or a Barbie doll," Mr Breheny said.

"This recommendation exemplifies part of a broader trend of nanny state policymaking. Often, bad policy ideas that begin in one area, such as tobacco regulation, end up spreading to other areas, such as fast food or, in this case, children's toys."

The parliamentary inquiry was initiated by the Greens' Larissa Waters, following her support for a "No Gender December" Christmas campaign against gender-stereotyped toys. Senator Waters has previously warned the "starkly separate aisles of pink and blue" have long-term impacts on equality, ultimately feeding into domestic violence and gender pay gap.

In 2014, Liberal Cory Bernardi, deputy chairman of the Senate committee, said Senator Waters had "consumed too much egg nog" in her backing of the "No Gender December" campaign.
NEwspapers take a big bEt on gambling

The Australian 7 March 2016

MP warns of next challenge for Cape York

Apps ‘gaming on remote lives’

The Australian 7 March 2016
Adults must lay down the rules: let’s start by banning smartphones in schools

But first parents must deal with their own addiction to this life-changing technology

CLARE FOGES

“Weep, weep” was the cry of William Blake’s chimney sweepers as they touted for trade on Georgian streets. Children sent into the darkest spaces and choked on filth, the dangers bilitely ignored by most adults of the time.

Today, in a supposedly more enlightened age, adults turn a blind eye while children are exposed to a different kind of filth on their smartphones and left to roam unsupervised in the darkest places online. We should weep at the damage being done to young minds and the grossness of grown-ups to do much about it.

This year, Childline in Britain revealed that it is being overwhelmed by victims of cyber bullying. A study from Glasgow University found that the pressure to “respond 24/7 on social media accounts can cause depression, anxiety and decrease sleep quality for teenagers”.

One distinguished psychiatrist, Iain McGilchrist, has said that a nonstop attachment to technology is leading to borderline “autistic” behaviour.

Meanwhile, admissions to hospital for self-harm have increased threefold over a decade, and admissions for eating disorders have quadrupled over the past three years alone. Can it be a coincidence that mental health problems in the young have spiralled in the same period, that, thanks to smartphones, the Internet has intruded every waking hour of the day?

Richard Graham, a psychologist specialising in technology addiction, tells me that in the past five years he has seen increasing numbers of young people “who have terrible anxiety associated with their smartphones” and also “from it causes them panic or even rage”. He warns that “more people should be sitting up and taking notice”.

Adults are not sitting up and taking notice. We are slack-jawed, scrolling through Twitter and checking WhatsApp for compliments in the great smartphone seduction to refuse them to children.

Dazzled by this addictive, life-changing technology we seem to have forgotten that there are two distinct groups of people — adults and children — and the former have a duty to set boundaries and protect the latter from harm.

Instead, parents give in to their adolescents’ pleading that not having a smartphone would lead to social death (even though Instagram and Facebook are accessible on a family computer). Most astonishing is the fact that smartphones are still allowed in many schools (in Australia, it is up to each school principal to decide if phones can be used in class.) A friend who trained as an English teacher gave up, describing it after a year, a London School of Economics study found that everyone, from phones school boosts exam results and benefits low-achieving and low-income pupils the most.

Of course, sophisticated teachers see the idea of banning devices as simple. They say the answer is more education, more “online safety” lessons, more sex and relationship advice.

In Britain, the Children’s Commissioner has called for a “rewrite of the guidance to schools” and “a social media campaign to stamp out sexting”. Opposition education spokesperson Lucy Powell has called for compulsory sex and relationship education.

This is all lip service. To try to educate children about the dangers of smoking cigarettes at eight we ban it. I would like to ban under-16s from having smartphones. That, however, is unlikely. In a classroom we should at least ban smartphones in schools. Give children seven clear hours a day to breathe, away from the endless updates, tweets, instant messages and selfies.

We are the adults, remember, not just a right but a responsibility to tell children what they can and cannot do.

THE TIMES

Clare Foges was chief speechwriter to Prime Minister David Cameron from 2001 to 2015.

Weekend Australian 19-20 March 2016

Cost aside, laptops can be a curse, says teachers’ union

EXCLUSIVE

NATALIA BITA
EDUCATION EDITOR

Students should leave their laptops “at the door” for some lessons, a teachers’ union says.

As it questioned the ubiquitous use of computers in classrooms, the Australian Education Union’s president, Correna Haythorpe, said she was concerned parents were required to pay for laptops, initially provided free by the former Rudd government through the $2.4 billion Digital Education Revolution scheme.

Ms Haythorpe said some public schools now required parents to buy $1,500 laptops even though they were not essential in every class. “If you’re in an English literature class that requires deep thought, conversation, analysis, it might be that the best thing is to check the laptops at the door,” she said.

“The bigger problem is the expectation of families to fund their own technology, there’s been a real shifting of the cost and it is quite a large burden to spend $500 on a laptop when your child starts school.”

Veteran headmaster John Valance told The Weekend Australian he had banned laptops in the classroom at Sydney Grammar, one of Australia’s top academic schools, because they distracted students from classroom discussions and listening to the teacher.

He said the school spent an technology in schools had been a “scandalous waste of money”.

Yesterday, one of the two academicians who reviewed the national curriculum for the federal government last year, Australian Catholic University senior research fellow Kevin Donnelly, said laptops should not be used in primary schools.

“You’ve got a good computer — it’s sitting on your shoulders — and you’ve got to hardwire the part in two or three times a day. It slows everything down when students are stumbling over what they’ve been taught or what they have to be mastered before you go into more creative activities.”

Many schools now use technology as a “marketing tool”, Dr Donnelly said. “They’re trying to give the impression to parents the school is cutting-edge and innovative, but it’s really a marketing tool,” he said.

Ms Haythorpe said that technology was a mainstream part of teaching, but questioned the need for laptops in primary school.

“Personally, as a primary school teacher, I would not use a laptop throughout the majority of the day,” she said. “My expectation is the children need to be focusing on what the class is learning together, instead of just looking at their laptop.”

“Teachers need training to use and monitor technology in the classroom.”

“Laptops are now very much a part of what we do in our classrooms and schools, so we need to look at what protocols are in place to ensure students are using it just for their education,” she said.

“It is increasingly difficult when you’ve got smartphones, iPads and laptops, and the question for me is: Do you ban them or do you develop new technology and teach students to use it effectively and safely?”

The director of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute, Geoff Prince, said he made extensive use of software to diagnose and immediately shortfalls in students at university. “However, I strongly oppose the view that teachers need a self-identified mathematical guru to tell them what they should do,” he said.

“I’ve heard a self-identified mathematics guru in the past that he could not understand this part of mathematics”.
Foster the wonder
“<i>I never met a child who wasn’t interested in natural history</i>” (“<i>Mr Wonderful</i>”, Feb 13–14). This statement, by David Attenborough, left me wondering. As a kindergarten teacher I try to foster children’s interest in all things creepy and crawly but am finding less and less interest there to develop.

Sadly, children are discouraged from getting dirty or intimate with any animal or insect for fear of being hurt. Children have less freedom to roam for fear of abduction and are spending more time in front of a screen. To rekindle their love of nature, perhaps we should ensure they watch David’s documentaries.

Lyn Jackson
Aran Hills, Qld

### Time for a sugar tax
It has never been a less exciting time to be an Australian child needing to see a dentist with the Turnbull government making plans to axe the child dental benefits schedule, which has helped more than 2 million children since its inception.

We need real leadership in health, as demonstrated in Britain with the announcement of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages to fight against the epidemics of obesity, tooth decay and diabetes. With one in four Australian children overweight or obese, and one in two 12-year-olds having decay in their adult teeth, it is time for the federal government to take decisive action and introduce a similar measure.

These drinks are just liquid sugar, with no nutritional benefit. The evidence is clear that a sugar tax would reduce consumption and improve health. In addition, other measures such as education and reduced marketing targeting children will help to reduce sugar consumption.

Matthew Hoppercraft, Dental School, Melbourne University, Vic
ADVERTISING


HEALTH

MEDIA EDUCATION
Peek, H.S., Beresin, E., 2015. Reality check: how reality television can affect youth and how a media literacy curriculum can help. Acad Psychiatry 40, 177–181


MEDIA RESEARCH


VIDEO GAMES


VIOLENCE


CONFERENCES
Student Well-being and Prevention of Violence Research Centre (SWAPv) Inaugural Conference

Enhancing child & adolescent well-being and preventing violence in school & early childhood settings

July 13-15, 2016 Flinders University Adelaide, South Australia


4th National No 2 Bullying Conference

18 – 19 April 2016 Mantra on View Hotel Gold Coast, Queensland

no2bullying.org.au

22nd World Meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA)

19-23 July 2016 University of NSW, Sydney

iec.mq.edu.au/research/cfrc/isra_2016
The young people surveyed said that digital video acted as a mood lifter and stress reliever, helped them to stay up to date with trends or to learn how to do something, or lulled them to sleep.

http://mashable.com/2016/03/29/gen-z-media-diet/#tYsR8lmRZuqK

...but what TV are they watching? Meanwhile, a year-long study at the University of Pennsylvania is looking at 2,000 American teenagers to see not only the teens are watching on TV, but how the content shapes the teens’ behavior. Researchers are collecting and analyzing survey data to look at exposure to risky health behavior (i.e., violence and sex), diversity in media choices, and how the media affects some groups differently from others.


Growing up digital in Canada A decade-long study into how digital technology affects today’s students has begun in Canada.

The Alberta Teacher’s Association, along with researchers from the University of Alberta, Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital, created the project to answer questions about how technology is affecting malleable young minds.

As a starting point, the Growing Up Digital Alberta researchers surveyed more than 2,200 teachers and principals across the province in December 2015.

The next phase of the work is to recruit 3,000 students and parents from nine school districts — rural, urban and suburban — who will allow researchers to look-into their digital environment for a week each year. The hope is to gather 1,000 pre-kindergartners, 1,000 elementary students and 1,000 teenagers to follow. They’ll receive a random prompt on their phones to answer questions, and take a video of their surroundings.

The environmental data will be combined with health observations such as weight, blood pressure, how long they slept, how well they slept, what they’re eating when they’re using technology, and their mood.


Leigh Hobbs is the new Children’s Laureate Best-selling author Leigh Hobbs is the Australian Children’s Laureate for 2016–2017. Hobbs is the author of a number of popular children’s books, including Old Tom and Horrible Harriet. He is now looking forward to undertaking a role that has focused on promoting the importance of reading, creativity and story in the lives of young Australians. The Australian Children’s Laureate is an initiative developed by the Australian Children’s Literature Alliance (ACLA), a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2008.

The theme for Hobbs’s two-year term as Australian Children’s Laureate will be ‘to champion creative opportunities for children, and to highlight the essential role libraries play in nurturing our creative lives’.