

V-Chips Allow Parents To Control Children's TV Programming At Home

(NAPSA)—While parents want to protect their children from offensive or inappropriate TV programming, many don't know that the tools they need may already be right in their living room. Every TV 13-inches and larger built since 2000 contains a V-chip, which can block individual channels or programs depending on content. This technology lets parents, not broadcasters, determine what is appropriate for their children to see and hear on TV.

Most television shows now include a rating, as established by the broadcasting industry. The rating icon is displayed in the upper left hand corner at the start of the program and succeeding hours if the program is longer than one hour. This rating also is encoded into the programs, so the V-chip technology can read the encoded information and block shows according to parental presets. Using the remote control, parents can program the V-chip to block certain shows based on their ratings. Because programs are rated by episode, ratings may vary from week to week and be blocked accordingly.

To use the V-chip, follow the directions using the TV's on-screen menu. Each brand and model may have somewhat different procedures, but none is difficult. There also are written instructions in the owner's manual. The V-chip is activated by using a password or code. Any change requires the user to know the code, therefore children will not be able to change the settings.

Although cable and satellite set-top boxes have their own



parental controls, each TV has its own so it's possible to block programs or channels even if the TV signal is received over the air. The V-chip also can be used to block uncut and unedited movies that run on premium channels using the MPAA rating system.

A new Web site from the Consumer Electronics Association, www.ce.org/vchip, provides consumers with information about how to utilize the V-chip built into their home TV and provides additional resources for parents.

Did You Know?

- All TVs 13-inches or larger built since 2000 contain a V-chip.
- Parents can block programs even without cable or satellite.
- TV ratings are displayed in the upper left corner at the start of the program.
- Passwords prevent children from changing V-chip settings.
- Uncut and unedited movies on premium channels also can be blocked.