

## ***5 Key Strategies for Media Education & Accountability***

1. *Develop a media plan in your home.* Families need to determine how, when and where media will be consumed. How many televisions, computers and radios are needed in a household? Are there days or times of the day that media should be consumed in the house? Should media consumption be consistent between parents and children? Where are the TV, computer, etc. located in the house? Is it the focal point in the living room? Are there televisions or computers in bedrooms? Do you consume media with your children? If so, then use those opportunities to talk to children about the media they consume – how does it make them feel, what did they learn, what would they do in those circumstances, etc. Media Education is usually better than censorship, but parents need to determine when censorship is appropriate.

2. *Media Education needs to be taught in the K-12 curriculum.* Canada and many European countries have been teaching media literacy for years. The US school systems are finally catching on, but parents and educators need to push for media education to be incorporated into school curriculum. Links to existing media curriculum (<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>) Media Literacy specialists can provide trainings for teachers on ways to incorporate it into the existing curriculum. The Bloom Collective has a lending library of books and DVD/videos that could be used in a classroom setting. They are located at 671 Davis NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

3. *Monitor the media in your community.* What kind of movies, magazines, radio stations, video arcades/stores, internet labs, billboards and other forms of media and advertising exists in your community? The media industry targets your children with various media campaigns – tobacco, alcohol, violence, hyper-sexuality, consumerism. *Also*, monitor the local news media. Do they report on news that is relevant to your community? Can you make an informed decision about elections based on the news in your community? Communicate with the media often and find out if anyone in your community is doing media research to assist your efforts. <http://griid.org/media-literacy/media-activist-toolkit/>

4. *Hold the Media in your community accountable.* Once you have determined what the media in your community is doing and have monitored their output or production, demand that they serve the public interest. The radio & TV stations are government regulated through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). They must serve the public good. (See our Community Guide to Radio/TV License Renewal ([http://www.mediamouse.org/griid/pdfs/fcc-license\\_renewal\\_guide.pdf](http://www.mediamouse.org/griid/pdfs/fcc-license_renewal_guide.pdf)))

Therefore, demand that they provide good information that allows you to participate in civic affairs, like elections, public safety, and public education. The stations all have a public file that lets you look at who is on their board of directors, station requirements, programming, etc. In the case of local TV stations, they are required to air a minimum of 3 hours a week of Children's Educational programming. (See information at <http://www.mediamouse.org/griid/fcc-ce.php>) Also, media policy is always changing and the public needs to take a greater role in determining what kind of media system we will have. Media policy can determine how much media companies can own, how media is regulated, the future of the internet and other digitalmedia, and what obligations the media have to the public and to democracy. For updates on Media Policy go to <http://www.freepress.net/>

5. *Develop your own Media and Media Strategies.* Schools, faith-based groups, community organizations and non-profits can develop their own media strategies in order to better engage the community about the issues they work on, but also to engage the news media in their communities. It is important that groups develop a media plan that includes how to develop relationships with news agencies, how to become a news source, and how to create your own media so that you are not limited to the coverage provided by mainstream media.

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