

when money and funds for educational projects is scarce. To be able to give school administrations or foundation people a very specific outline of experimental procedures and hypotheses can have tremendous influence. The presence of a research model was one of the factors that led the Imagination Foundation and Antioch College/Columbia, Maryland to support this project with equipment even though I had no previous relationship with them.

Much investigation still needs to be done concerning children's television workshops. Future re-

searchers should take larger samples over longer periods of time with more adequate budgets and facilities. There is a need to incorporate a measurement for visual literacy and to relate that measurement to workshop conditions and program production. A redesign of the evaluation instruments will be necessary in future studies.

It is imperative that children today be exposed to some type of television workshop. It is hoped that this report will be of help to those dedicated people who can "see the light" now.

## Action for Children's Television

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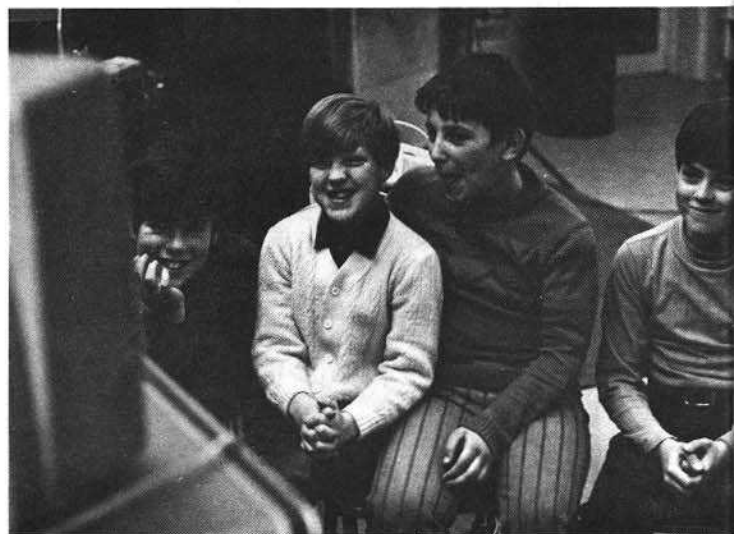
Who is out there talking to our children? There's one rather simple answer to this question — TELEVISION. ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION, however, is talking for children who are being talked to and at. ACT is a Boston-based support group for parents, teachers and professionals concerned with television programming and how to change it. The group has been responsible for drastic changes in children's programming.

ACT has: influenced broadcasters to appoint vice-presidents in charge of children's programming; encouraged the National Association of Broadcasters to reduce the commercial time in children's programming from 16 minutes an hour to 12 minutes (adult programming is 8-10 minutes an hour); been instrumental in eliminating children's vitamin advertising through law suits leveled against three major drug companies and the Federal Trade Commission; held symposiums with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Yale University Child Study Department, among others; encouraged the diversity of children's television on Saturday mornings; alerted parents to the problems and the potential of children's television and collected their feelings and their hopes for action.

Originally, ACT was a core group of four women concerned about the television their own children were watching. They watched children's television, met with local station executives and read as much as possible about children and television. Their initial meetings in 1968 were concerned primarily with the prevalence of violence on television. The group came to realize that violence existed on television because it sold products and that as long as broadcasters believed such programming was the easiest way to get large audiences, the highest ratings, the most advertising dollars, they would continue their present scheduling. ACT saw clearly that the entire financial structure of television, especially with regard to children's programming, would have to be changed. Broadcasters could not

be allowed to justify using the same criteria for planning children's programming as for adult television. Television, for children, must become a public service arena designed to be responsible to the needs of the child rather than the pressures of advertisers.

Right now, over 100,000 other parents, teachers and professionals have joined ACT's demands for better children's programming. Organizations which sponsor ACT read like a Who's Who of concerned educators and professionals. They include: The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Friends Service Committee, The American Group Psychotherapy Association, The Association of Childhood Education International, The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The National Conference of Christians and Jews and The National Health Council. For financial support, ACT relies on \$5.00 membership dues as well as administrative funding from the John and Mary Markle Foundation in New York and program support from the



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Ford Foundation.

To those in power, ACT is saying - clearly and loudly - that new guidelines for children's programming must be adopted in which different kinds of programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of children at different age levels. Further, ACT is advocating that: there shall be no sponsorship and no commercials on children's programs; no performers shall be permitted to use or mention products, services or stores by brand name during children's program; every station shall provide daily programming for children; and there shall be no less than 14 hours of such programming per week, as part of its public service requirement.

These guidelines acknowledge that what children watch is a JOINT responsibility of both parents and broadcasters. Broadcasters retain total freedom to make their own decisions about the content of children's programs. Manufacturers of toys, cereals and candy would be permitted to advertise on programs directed to parents. The assumption behind ACT's guidelines is that children just do not have the experience or judgment to contend with commercials and they should not be used to pressure their parents into buying.

ACT is concerned with the implementation of these guidelines on local and national levels. By first raising the consciousness of parents, teachers and kids, and then by following through with legal action to change the regulating structures, ACT is

making quite an impact.

In order to help others who share their concerns, ACT has prepared a number of first-rate publications. Their Nutrition Kit, aimed at kids and adults, points out some alternatives to sweets. A Resource List is also available which includes general information on cable, television, and children and television. These publications, and others, provide resources and an initial step for others who want to join the action.

On a different level, ACT has petitioned the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and CBS. They have picketed WHDH in Boston to restore the "Captain Kangaroo Show." They have sponsored and participated in numerous conferences and symposiums. ACT has commissioned some of the most important studies on children and television to date. These studies show the entire gamut of children's television concerns, and they are providing the academic support for ACT to continue its work. (Others are supporting ACT on a purely common-sense level. The Parade Magazine 1972 study released the fact that more people are concerned about what their kids watch and more concerned about how to change it than was thought possible.)

ACT is providing a means for those who are interested in changing the entire structure of children's programming to do so and is well on its way to making television for children the public service arena most of us want.

## Invitation to a Video Forum

ANNE PAGE

Videotapes made by kids for kids are not being shared. Much valuable interchange is being lost because such tapes have the possibility of stimulating dialogue/discussion between groups in various parts of the country. I have recently been involved with this kind of video-pal exchange between high school video classes. The results have been so rewarding that it has occurred to me that the principle of sharing tapes could be expanded. I'm willing to make this happen.

From my perspective, the value of this activity lies in the area of awareness and knowledge which can be gained from the experience of sharing feelings, topics of concern and ideas within a group of people from all over the country. (Why not the world?) The processes involved when each group creates their own messages are equally important. The act of sharing of a group forum becomes a real experience towards extending individual efforts into a

collective consciousness. It is also an act, of course, in expanding and exploring new communications possibilities.

### An Example

A class of Philadelphia high school kids makes a tape on "Housing in Your City/Town." (Or even more specific topics such as "Tenants Equal Rights, What is Being Done in Your Area?") Concurrently, classes in Chicago, Illinois; Flagstaff, Arizona; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Boston, Massachusetts; Palm Beach, Florida and Little Rock, Arkansas or wherever, also prepare tapes of their housing environments. Then the fun begins when these are sent to each participating group. Beside the advantage of receiving information on a particular topic from different areas and viewpoints, this video forum concept can stimulate kids to create new networks of video exchange. A fall out of the process will be discussions about "What is mass communication?"