Media as the Babysitter

This sheet summarizes the way young children view the television world and then gives several guidelines to alleviate the situation.

1. Children do NOT see media as different from the real world.
2. The active child spending hours watching media becomes unnaturally passive.
3. Children lose persistence: “quit-easy” attitude.
4. Kids become sophisticated, but not mature.
5. Children learn to be violent from watching violence.
6. they learn that the “end justifies the means”
7. they learn that violence solves problems rather than attempting to resolve conflicts
8. they learn that violence carries few or no penalties
9. Young children trust commercials and believe that the commercials tell the truth.
10. Media’s most subtle danger for children is what it displaces or replaces in their normal, everyday lives.
11. playing outdoors
12. hobbies
13. socializing with other children
14. Know what media you are allowing children to watch.
15. Set boundaries for the amount of time children can watch media. Do this ahead of time and explain the boundaries clearly to the child.
16. Talk about media with the child. Discuss what they see and how the values shown compare with your personal values.
17. Choose carefully the programs that the child can watch. Understand that media shows that reveal values different from your own will *produce a change in their value system*.
18. Watch media with your children.
19. Teach the child about what they saw rather than just allowing the media to be a babysitter or entertainment device.
20. Set the example for the child by restricting your own viewing. Any person who wants to help someone control their viewing must already control their own viewing.
21. If you have your favorite media … you must allow your child to have his/her favorite show even if it is one that you do not approve of. Otherwise, they see the hypocrisy.
22. Children are confused by and eventually resent the “do as I say, not as I do” lifestyle.