



By DICK MILLER
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To continue with the theme of last week's column, I gathered the following information from A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S READING, by Nancy Larrick.

At the age of three, an American child is usually a regular television viewer, watching forty-five minutes a day. In the primary grades he probably spends two and a half to three hours a day watching television. By the sixth or seventh grade the average child's viewing time reaches three or four hours daily.

Between the ages of three and sixteen, he will probably spend more time watching television than attending school. At least, this is true of the AVERAGE American child, according to recent research. There are children who spend as much as five or six hours a day before the flickering screen. With so much time for television, how does a child have time to read?



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comic books. Also, it has probably decreased children's time for play.

In general, children in grades six, seven, and eight are the heaviest TV viewers. Those in the sixth grade include many children of high IQ who are good readers. But by the tenth grade, most of the high-IQ youngsters are no longer heavy viewers. At this stage, it is young people with lower reading ability who spend the most time with TV.

As might be expected, similar television viewing habits are likely to prevail among parents and children in a family. If father and mother watch TV for long hours, the children do, too. Frequently adult TV choices are adopted by the boys and girls.

The very young child has little to choose from on television except for the animated cartoons. In 1963, there was only one live network program for the nursery school age.

BY THE TIME A YOUNGSTER is in first grade, however, he is probably spending 40 per cent of his viewing time on adult programs. And in one community, sixth-graders devoted 79 per cent of their TV time to adult shows.

Adults, on the other hand, are frequently enthusiastic viewers of programs planned for children. "Disneyland" was a classic example. In 1957, it was the overwhelming favorite of children twelve and under. More than two-thirds of those under six watched it frequently, and so did 5,100,000 adults.

The distinction between a children's program and an adult program has become nominal. The Westerns shown in the afternoon and early evening are simpler, perhaps, than those scheduled in what we think of as adult viewing hours, but they are, none the less, Westerns. Even the crime program, usually thought of as an adult show, is only one step removed from a children's adventure program centering around a superhero. Both attract children and adults.

As a child dials from one TV channel to another, without plan or purpose, what does he find? Try it for a few days and see. The choices are likely to include manslaughter, drug addiction, mental illness, burglary, extortion, and bitter emotional crises. There are crooked police, corrupt officials, and double-dealers of every kind. All too often, might makes right in the TV world. Even the milder family dramas may present false values no mother wants her child to embrace.

According to AMERICA magazine, 16 per cent of the TV programs between 4 and 10 p.m. were "crime and violence shows" in 1954; by 1961 they had risen to 50 per cent of all programs.

Day and night there is relentless interruption by commercials which glamorize common-

Matt Kelly 6th Grade B-Ball Champs



Matt Kelly wrapped up 1965-66 Sixth Grade basketball championship as they defeated Madison 47-30.--Top scorer for both teams was Madison's Isaac McMullens who bucketed 2- points. Joey Bryant, voted the games outstanding player, dumped in 17 markers for Matt Kelly.--Bryant also received the "Kenneth Baldwin Memorial Trophy" for exemplifying outstanding ability and sportsmanship. The trophy was presented by Mrs. Susan Commerford and Stan Baldwin, parents of Kenneth shown in lower left photo with coaches Jerry Holloway and John Bass. . . Matt Kelly Champs pictured in upper photo (l-r) front row: Robert Taylor, Charles Bailey, William Smith, Joey Bryant, Larry Cross--Back row (l-r): Coach Holloway, Henry Slack, Moses Foster, Glynn Coleman, Sam Smith, Coach John Bass. . . Madison Team shown in lower right photo (l-r) front row: Charles Brown, Larry Holmes, David Gilmore, James Lewis--Back Row (l-r) Jim McGurley, Robert Myer, Isaac McMullens, John S. Williams, Mike Wilson, Coach William Evans.

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place products. Even the cartoons for preschoolers are shot through with advertising. ALONG WITH THE CHEAP, the sensational, and the commercial, there are many entertaining and worthwhile programs. Children need guidance in finding them. They also need direction in limiting their television so that they have time for other activities, including reading.