

A Series: THE BLACK FAMILY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE 80's

PART VI - OUR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION IN THE '80s

By Maudra Jones

Previous conversations in this segment of the series have dealt with the question of what we give our children to grow on - by our example; by the things we feed into their minds from birth; by the foundations we build at home for healthy, wholesome, fruitful and purposeful living; and by our informed and meaningful participation in all of the issues of community life which affect our families and our children.

While it would seem that the foregoing represent the natural duties and responsibilities that go along with being parents, real evidences of the "falling-off" of family structures and traditional practices of the Black family, in particular, are all around us. All around us, we see indications that some of our children have been denied positive examples at home. Some of our children have been denied their share of "mind-food" to grow on. Some of our children are reaching out to others for answers because they have not been provided the foundation on which to build a wholesome, fruitful and productive life. Some of our children have been denied the opportunity to love, share, respect, honor, obey and aspire. Some of our children lack aspiration, hurt from anonymity and strike out because no one hears their cries for help.

Dr. Beverly P. Cole, National Education Director for the NAACP, wrote recently in a Crisis Magazine article titled "A Profile of Black Education":

"We can no longer afford to point the finger and pass the blame. As parents and interested citizens, we must also accept our fair share of the responsibility for motivating students, supporting them and

serving as advocates to ensure that they receive a quality education."

Based on our past history and the history that is happening before our very eyes, Black parents cannot afford to leave our children's education entirely to others. We cannot afford to put our personal interests before our children's future - our future -



Maudra Jones

the future of the world. We must take the time or make the time to give our DAILY attention to the development of our children. Education is a life-long process. Education should prepare us to live. Thus, parents should take to heart the admonitions of Dr. Poussaint and others who plead to us to read and talk with our children from birth. Dr. James Comer, professor of Child Psychiatry at Yale University, reinforces this point in his statement:

"...parents must read and must talk about and analyze the world themselves." Dr. Comer emphasizes the fact that we have got to model, in our own behavior, what we want our children to pick up and to emulate. Learning at home is only the beginning - yet a critical beginning in the life-long process of education.

As discussed earlier, the "home-curriculum" covers a world of learning experiences. Among the "learning experiences" having the greatest impact on our youth today is the phenomenon called TV. According to Carl

Rowan, popular journalist, "There's no doubt that television has a mighty impact on youngsters." Rowan's column "Parents and Television" reviewed a report on the findings of nearly 2,500 scientific studies conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health over the past ten years, on the link between televised violence and children's behavior. Their conclusion was, he reported: "There is 'overwhelming' evidence that 'excessive' violence on TV causes aggressive behavior in children." The following are some of the specific findings from the NIMH study:

- Prime-time shows contain an average of 5 violent acts per hour, while children's weekend shows have an average of 18. But there's no precise definition of violence - either in prime-time or in cartoons.

- As TV viewing increases, youngsters' reading and IQ scores tend to go down.

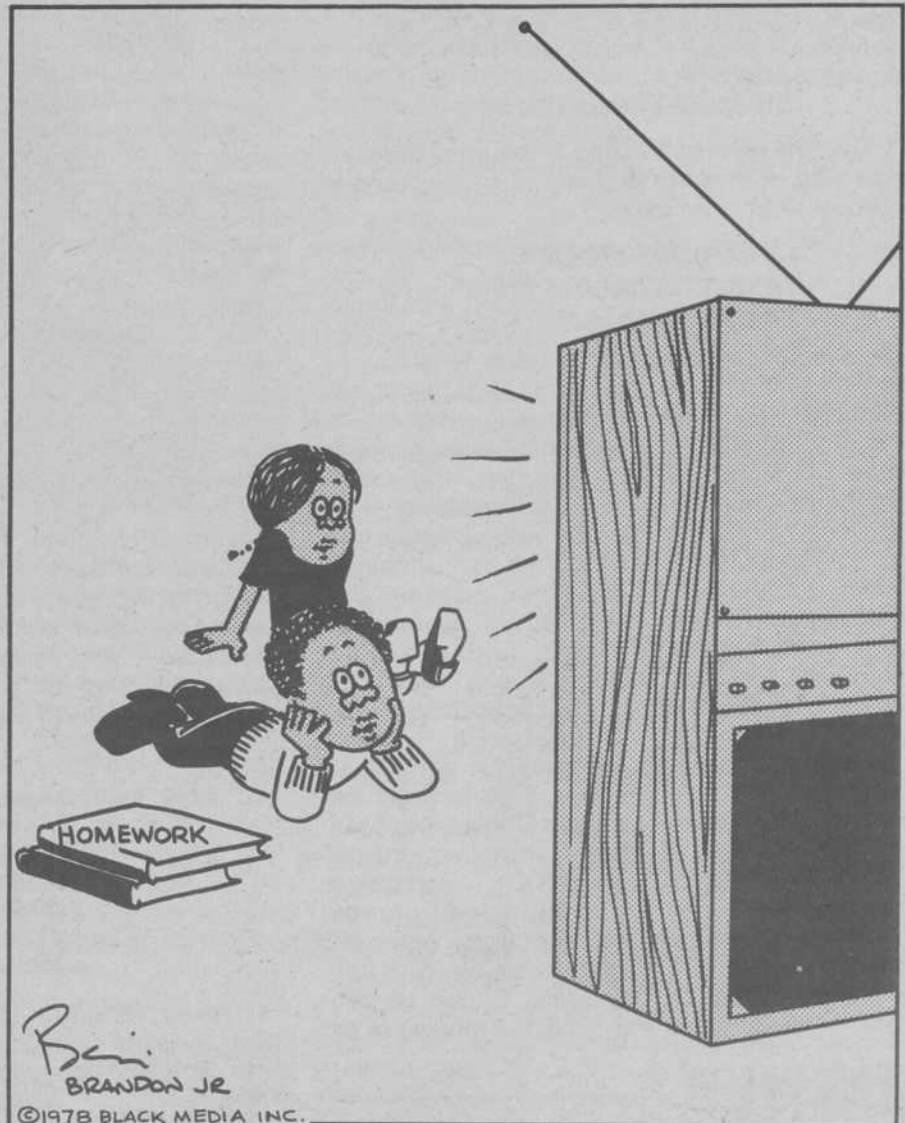
- One study that followed a group of children for 5 years found a link between TV violence and increased delinquency, fighting and conflicts with parents.

- Heavy viewers of TV, at all ages, are more apt to think the world is violent...to trust other people less and to believe that the world is a "mean and scary" place.

Although it is noted that the report was not totally critical of TV, because TV also has the potential to play a positive role in teaching about health and family life, there is still the question of how parents determine what children are learning from TV.

Rowan suggests that there are five important ways which parents can influence what their children view and learn from TV:

1. They can set the number of hours their



BRANDON JR.
©1978 BLACK MEDIA INC.

THE BABY SITTER

children are exposed to TV.

2. They can decide what kinds of programs their children watch and supervise their TV time.

3. They can watch some shows together with their children.

4. They can explain how TV information can be applied to everyday events.

5. They can discuss TV programs with others in the presence of their children and thus provide a model for critical viewing skills.

I would add that Educational TV (PBS) is an excellent learning tool. Parents are key in monitoring their children's viewing habits and should not overlook this important learning experience in the education process. "The medium is the message" - and the messages of

sex and violence that are of those values which being transmitted to our children in the 80's, are part of the Black family tradition. threaten the foundation

★★★

BEAUTY SALON for SALE

Must see to appreciate.

For an appointment please call

385-5174

J.C. Carpet Co.

3250 Sirius Ave. # 1 • Las Vegas, NV 89102

Office Phone 384-8682

or

Warehouse Phone 871-5073

CLAYTON BAYER
Lic. # 8879

Res. 648-2210
Beeper 381-3815