

APRIL 2019

The issue:

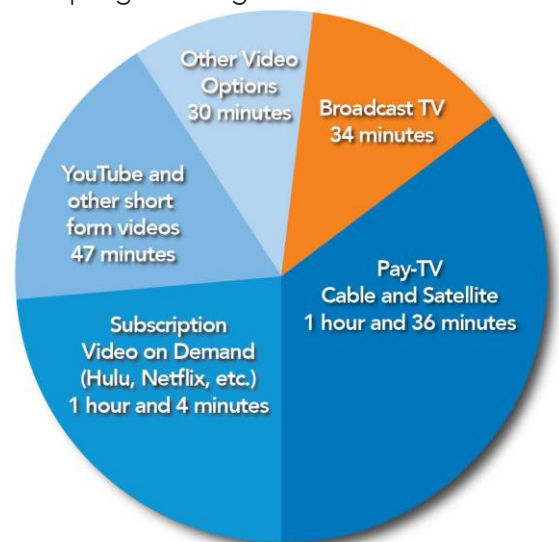
The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) current children's television programming rules (sometimes referred to as "kid vid") are outdated and ineffective. While failing to serve the needs of children, they also undermine local broadcast stations' ability to meet viewers' programming demands. These rules should be updated to better reflect today's marketplace and children's engagement with video content.

Here's why:

When the FCC adopted its children's educational and informational (E/I) programming rules more than two decades ago, broadcast TV was by far the most significant form of video programming available to children and their parents. But the children's video landscape has dramatically changed, providing a plethora of educational options across multiple platforms, from cable channels dedicated solely to children to streaming services and short-form videos.

Broadcasters remain committed to serving children and seek the flexibility to reach them in more efficient and effective ways. The current rigid requirements, coupled with declining demand, discourage broadcasters from offering the programming that children and other viewers desire.

Children no longer rely on broadcast TV as their primary source of video content.



TV Viewing of Kids Ages 2 to 16 in 2017
(Hours per day)

- Saturday morning TV viewing by children of the four major English-language networks has declined more than 90 percent over the last 30 years.
- On the average Saturday morning in 2017, only 0.58 percent of children ages 2-11 watched the four major networks combined.
- During the 2017-2018 TV season, fewer than 90 children ages 2-17 watched E/I programming via broadcast antenna on the average NBC and CBS station; 95 percent of the audience for children's E/I programming on NBC and CBS stations was ages 18 or older and about two-thirds was over the age of 55.
- According to Nielsen, only 0.5 percent of TV households with children ages 2-17 lack both pay TV and internet access.

continued



Broadcasters Seek Flexibility in Meeting Children's TV Programming Needs

In response to viewer demand, broadcasters continue to increase their investment in local and national news coverage, live sports and public interest programming. Unfortunately, the current children's video programming rules make it difficult for stations to find time to air the content viewers want and children's TV programming that is required.

Broadcasters are increasingly forced to forego airing other programming because of rigid children's TV rules. To meet children's programming requirements, stations have reported:

- Breaking into extended weather coverage;
- Foregoing a six-week community forum on the opioid epidemic;
- Declining to cover local parades and other events; and
- Declining to air extended weekend morning news shows.

The bottom line:

The FCC should update its rules to reflect today's video marketplace and give broadcasters the flexibility to better serve children and their communities.