

Good morning and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to explain the importance I feel WITF programming has on our pre-school children. I have been fortunate to reap the benefits of WITF as a parent and an early childhood educator. In both aspects I find the programming of this station to be very valuable.

In Early Childhood Education we often find ourselves frustrated as we struggle to teach children whose minds aren't stimulated, children who spend many hours with poor quality television. But with public television, we have a medium which we can actually use to enhance lessons and promote active minds. Their shows have proven to teach children the basic preschool components such as letters, numbers, and shapes but more importantly their programs teach morals, friendship, kindness, sharing, caring and generosity. Many parents who currently watch Clifford, Sesame Street, Super Why and others with their children WILL resort to programs such as Sponge Bob to "entertain" their children. I can tell you, first hand, that Early Childhood educators see a difference between children who watch quality cartoons such as those on WITF versus ones aired on other stations. If a child is going to watch television, and some of them watch it HOURS ON END, why not give them programming that will stimulate their minds?

We all can agree how important it is to stimulate a child's brain in order to have the best development. We also can all agree that children LOVE to watch cartoons. While we do not allow much tv at all in our facilities we do permit the use of WITF programs to engage children in a lesson and intrigue them to participate and learn more. There are times our teachers show clips of programs to help children relate to lessons, there are teachers who use Scholastic magazines with familiar WITF characters such as Clifford to help children relate because after all they recognize Clifford from home and there are teachers who use WITF programs as an ice-breaker because who doesn't know Elmo?! Bottom line is that these programs are incredibly valuable to the well being of our young children. I can state this matter of factly because I am the mother of three children ages six (6), four (4), and two (2).

Each weekday morning I have a ten minute battle with my six year old son because he wants to watch Super Why, one of WITF's children's programs. Unfortunately he has to catch the bus when Super Why airs, but it is a great battle to have to fight. I have a little boy who loves books and Super Why reinforces this when he repeats the line from the program: "When we have a question where do we look? In a book." Our four year old son is in love with Clifford the Big Red Dog. As his mother I find this fascinating because Clifford is a more sentimental and "moral" based program than Super Why and our Ian is the most emotional and loving member of our family. Then you have our two year old daughter who surprisingly isn't in love with Elmo, rather with Abby Cadabby. The fact that this character is a fairy princess is very attractive to a preschool girl and parents can be thrilled too. While Abby is a fairy princess she is a wonderful female role model who helps stimulate children in an academic and emotional sense rather than simply going to the ball in a beautiful evening gown. She displays acts of kindness, intellect and more.

While my children LOVE the WITF shows I would not be lost without them. However I am an Early Childhood Educator so I know how to stimulate their minds in an age appropriate manner without TV. My fear in losing WITF programs is for the families who do not do anything else with their children other than put the television on. Such children watch tv for hours and hours a day so my preference is for them to be watching high quality programs. I am incredibly grateful that my children run around the house reenacting scenes from Super Why and looking through books for information and playing spelling games rather than jumping off of the kitchen counter because they want to be just like Bat Man.

There is not all that much “good” out there for very young children, especially for those lacking proper parental supervision and guidance. I BEG you to really think about how much impact WITF programs; whether radio, television, educational outreach, et cetera have on the children (and all supporters) in the viewing area. Television has an enormous impact on children’s learning and behavior. We want our children to be “fed” quality not garbage. PLEASE VOTE TO KEEP WITF OPERATING AS IT IS TODAY.

Thank you.