



Children's Educational Television

The Children's Television Act requires each U.S. broadcast television station to air programming specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children. It also limits the amount of time broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite providers can devote to advertisements during children's programs.

On July 10, 2019, the Commission [adopted new rules](#) to provide broadcasters greater flexibility to meet children's television programming requirements. The effective dates of the new rules will be announced in the Federal Register. Once the new rules take effect, TV stations will be required to:

- Air at least 156 hours annually of core programs, including at least 26 hours per quarter of regularly scheduled weekly programs.
- Air the majority of their core programs on their primary program stream. Stations that multicast more than one stream of video programming may air up to 13 hours per quarter of regularly scheduled weekly programs on one of their multicast streams.

Core programming for children

Core programming is specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children 16 years of age and under, including the child's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs. In addition, core programming:

- Serves the educational and informational needs of children as a significant purpose.
- Is at least 30 minutes long, except that TV stations are permitted to air a limited amount of short-form programs less than 30 minutes long, including public service announcements and interstitial programs, and have those programs count as core programs.
- Is aired between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- Is a regularly scheduled weekly program, except that TV stations are permitted to air a limited amount of core programs that are not regularly scheduled on a weekly basis, such as educational specials and regularly scheduled non-weekly programs, and have those programs count as core programs.

Commercial television stations must provide information identifying educational programs for children to publishers of program guides and TV listings. In addition, commercial television stations must identify core programs by displaying the symbol E/I throughout the program.

Commercial time limitations

FCC rules limit the amount of commercial matter that can be aired in children's television programming for an audience of children 12 years old and younger to 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays. The FCC also requires this program material be separated from commercials by intervening and unrelated program material. The time limits do not apply to public television stations because these stations are generally prohibited from airing commercials.



Displaying web addresses during programs

The display of website addresses during programs directed to children ages 12 and under is permitted only if the website meets the following criteria:

- It offers a substantial amount of bona fide program-related or other non-commercial content.
- It is not primarily intended for commercial purposes.
- The website's home page and menu pages clearly distinguish non-commercial from commercial sections.
- The page of the website that viewers are directed to is not used for e-commerce, advertising or other commercial purposes.

Television broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite providers may not display website addresses during or adjacent to a children's program if products are sold featuring a character in the program, or a program character is used to sell products. The website display prohibition does not apply to certain public service announcements, station identifications and emergency announcements.

Tracking compliance with FCC rules

Commercial TV stations are required to file with the FCC annual reports identifying the station's core programs and other efforts to comply with their educational programming obligations. These reports - Children's Television Programming Reports (FCC Form 2100 Schedule H) – must be available to the public. The reports can be obtained from the station's online public inspection file at publicfiles.fcc.gov or from the FCC's [Children's Educational Television Reporting](#) page. Also, commercial TV broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite providers must maintain records to verify compliance with commercial time limits and make these records available for public inspection.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission Consumer
and Governmental Affairs Bureau Consumer
Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last Reviewed: 07/19/19

