



## Guided Viewing with Early Learners

### A Parent's Guide to Watching Television with Young Children

In a broad sense, the objective of guided viewing is to guide children through the process of connecting with television programming. As families use television time as a learning tool, incorporating the practice of guided viewing can produce both social-emotional and academic gains. Guided viewing is a four step process that happens while watching television together.

#### **Step 1: Identify**

Help children to recognize similarities between the characters in the program and themselves. If watching SuperWhy! for example, at the onset of the program the parent might make statements “Princess Presto is wearing a dress just like you!” and “she is learning to read just like you.” This practice also helps to build interest in the program for subsequent stages.

#### **Step 2: Connect**

Watch for when the child starts to experience emotional reactions similar to the characters in the program then help them make the connection. For example, the child suddenly displays a sad facial expression when the Princess Presto character experiences a problem that makes her sad during the program. At that point the parent might ask the child to explain why Princess Presto became sad.

#### **Step 3: Think and Learn**

Extend the conversation by asking the child if they have ever experienced a similar problem. Then instruct the child to pay attention to how characters solve the problem to which the child has connected. After the problem is solved, the parent might ask the child to recount what the character did to solve the problem or make them feel better.

#### **Step 4: Apply**

After the program has ended, create activities that parents and children can do together. While engaged in the activity examine if the child is using the strategies learned from the television program. An example would be if the child is attempting to “sound out” a word when reading, are they doing it like Princess Presto did? If not, then the parent would remind the child of the character’s problem and what they did to solve it. Then ask the child if they think it might work for them to encourage the child to use the strategy.

Parents can access the Ready to Learn Collection in [PBS LearningMedia](#) or [PBS Kids](#) for activities that parents and children can do together at home.