

Key Findings from 2020 TV Ratings Research among Parents

From August 24 to September 1, 2020, Hart Research Associates conducted a national online survey among 1,020 parents of children age two to 17. The survey is a follow-up to online surveys conducted in August 2018, June 2016, May 2014, and November 2011, and is part of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board's ongoing tracking of American parents' awareness of TV ratings, reported usage of TV ratings, and feelings toward TV ratings.

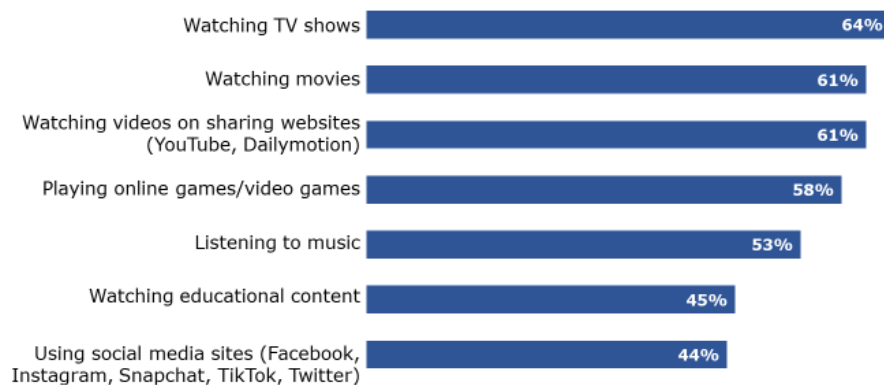
Overview: Parents continue to report high levels of usage of and positive sentiment toward the TV ratings system. Nearly nine in 10 (89%) parents find it helpful – the highest figure ever recorded in these surveys. More than three in four (77%) parents report using the system often or sometimes, and a similar proportion have a favorable opinion of it (80%). Parents continue to express near-unanimous satisfaction with the accuracy of ratings for TV shows overall (95% satisfied).

Many parents indicate that their children's media consumption has increased during the pandemic, including 64% who say their children are spending more time watching TV shows. Parents indicate that their children are watching TV shows through a variety of services.

More than three-fifths of parents say their children are spending more time watching TV shows (64%), movies (61%), and videos shared online (61%) than they were before the pandemic.

- o Many parents also report that their children are spending more time playing online or video games (58%), listening to music (53%), watching educational content (45%), and using social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, or Twitter (44%).

Since the coronavirus crisis started, my child/children are spending more time:



Parents are most likely to say their children watched TV shows over streaming services in the past two weeks, but the majority also say that their children watched live shows through broadcast, cable, or satellite television.

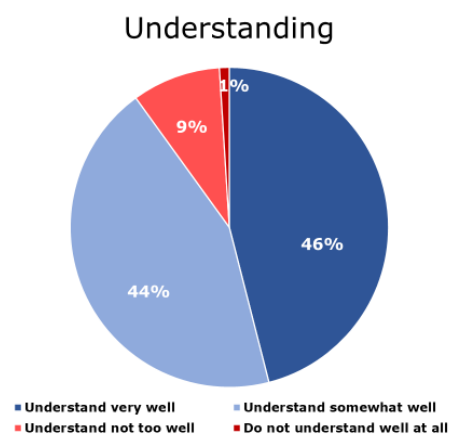
- o Fully 84% of parents report that their children have streamed TV programming through a digital streaming service that does not offer live TV, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, or Hulu.¹
- o Two in three (61%) parents say their children watched live shows through a broadcast, cable, or satellite TV connection, 48% say their children watch TV shows through cable TV on demand or on DVR, and 42% say their children streamed through a cable subscription service.

Parents' understanding of the TV ratings system remains high.

Fully 90% of parents report that they understand the TV ratings system that provides parental ratings for broadcast and cable TV programs, including 46% who say they understand parental ratings very well. This is virtually unchanged since 2018 when 90% of parents said they understood the parental ratings, including 48% who said they understood them very well.

The elements of the TV ratings system about which parents are most familiar

continue to be ratings that provide guidance based on a child's age (88% aware) and the use of letters that provide information about program content like suggestive or crude language, sexual situations, or violence (76%).



Most parents continue to hold a favorable opinion of the TV ratings system, find it helpful, and report using it.

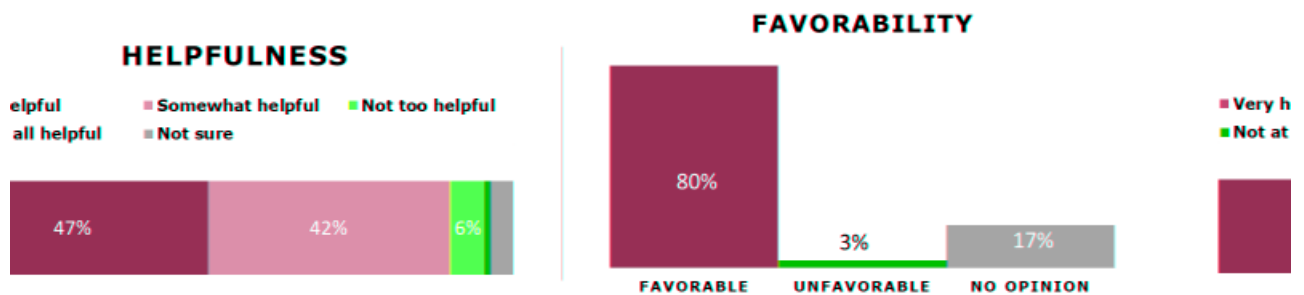
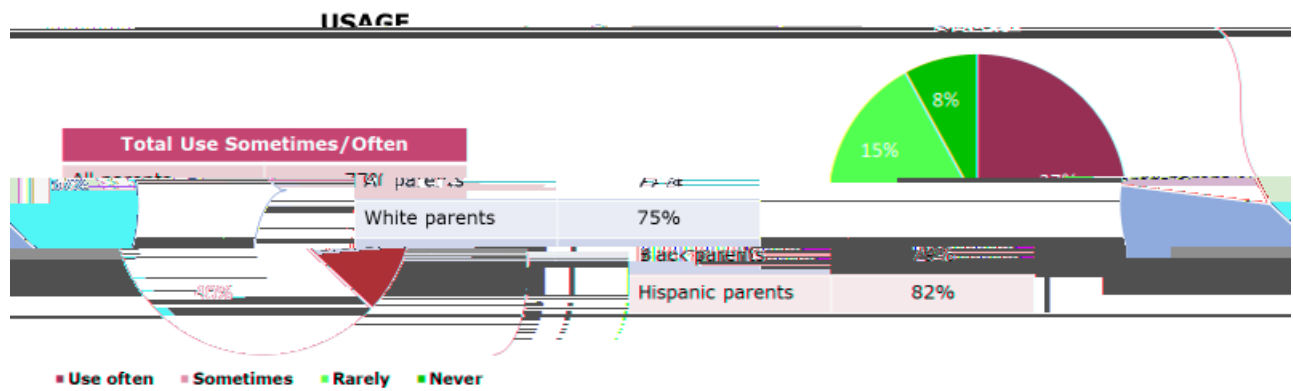
Four in five (80%) parents have a favorable opinion of the parental ratings for TV programs—a slight increase from 2018 (76%) and the highest level measured.

- o Specific elements of the TV ratings system that add to parents' favorable opinion of it include content ratings (67% say they give them a more favorable opinion of the TV ratings system) and guidance based on the child's age (67% also say this makes them more favorable).

Nearly nine in 10 (89%) parents find the TV ratings system helpful—a level comparable to 2018 (88%).

More than three in four (77%) parents report using the parental ratings sometimes or often when deciding whether their child can watch a particular TV show, which is on par with the highest level measured in 2016.

- o Parents of elementary- and middle-school-aged children report the highest levels of TV ratings usage: 81% among parents with children under six use them often, 84% among those with six- to 10-year-olds, 86% among parents with 11- to 12-year-olds, 77% among those with 13- to 15-year-olds, and 57% among parents with older teens age 16 or 17.
- o Black parents (79%) and Hispanic parents (82%) report slightly higher levels of use than whites (75%).



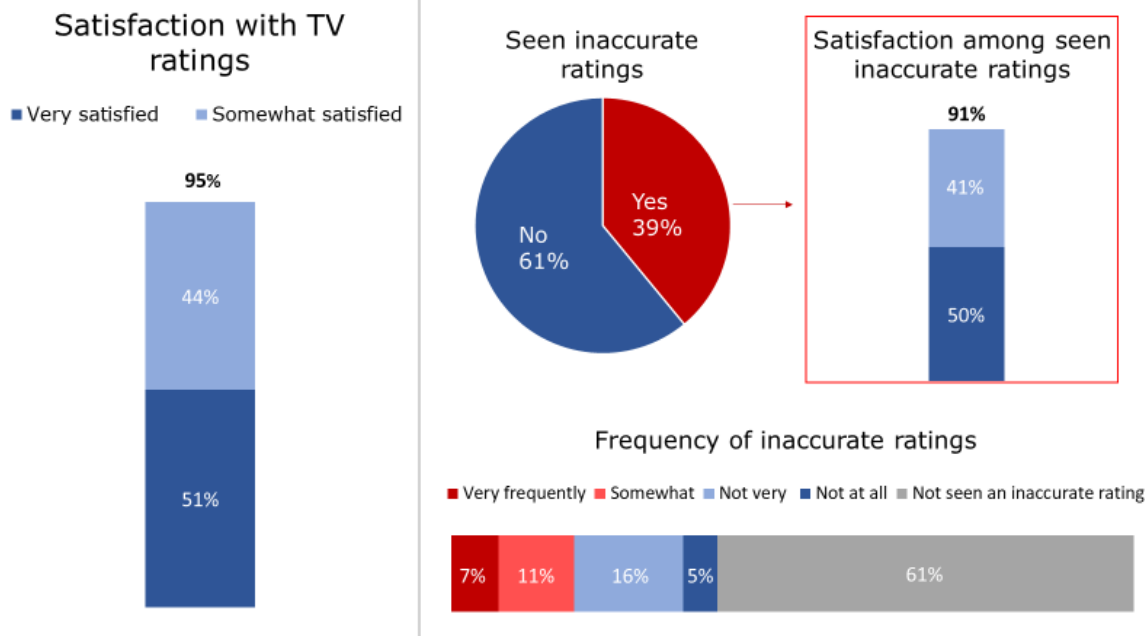
Nearly all parents say they are satisfied with the accuracy of ratings for TV shows overall.

When presented with a summary of the six TV ratings categories and five content descriptors used to rate TV programs, fully 95% of parents said they are satisfied with the accuracy of parental ratings for TV shows on broadcast and cable television, including 51% who are very satisfied. A mere 5% are dissatisfied.

When specifically asked whether they recall seeing any show they felt was rated inaccurately, two in three (61%) parents cannot recall any show they thought had an inaccurate rating, which is down slightly since 2018 (67%). Although 39% of

parents have seen a show they felt had an inaccurate rating, only 18% of all parents say this has happened frequently.

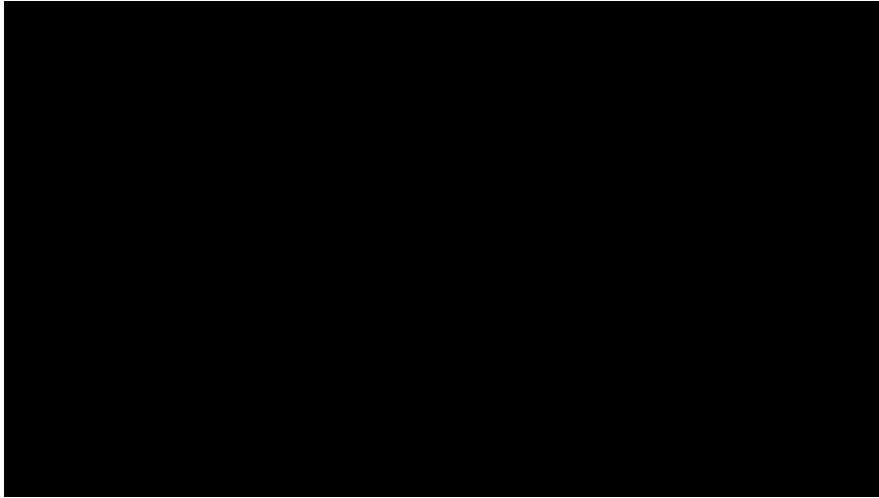
It is notable that even among parents who recall seeing a show they thought was rated inaccurately, fully 81% of these same parents feel favorable toward the parental ratings system, and an overwhelming 91% are satisfied with the overall accuracy of the TV ratings.



More than one in three parents have used parental controls or a V-Chip, and these parents are nearly unanimous in their belief that they have been useful.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of parents say they have used parental controls from their cable/satellite system and/or V-Chip to block shows or channels, which is virtually unchanged from 2018 (35%). Nearly all the parents who have used controls think they were very (75%) or somewhat (24%) useful for blocking shows they did not want their children to watch.

- o Nearly all parents who use parental controls use parental TV ratings (95%, compared with 77% among parents overall) and find the ratings helpful (97%, compared with 89% among parents overall).



Parents who say they have a V-chip or parental controls but do not use them say the main reasons are because an adult is usually nearby when their children watch TV (51%), they trust their children to make their own decisions (44%), or they have house rules about what their children can watch (35%).

It is notable that more than half (52%) of parents have used types of parental controls beyond those offered through their cable/satellite system or V-Chip (such as controls available through mobile devices, apps, their cellular provider, or streaming services). This is up from 44% of parents who said they used these types of parental controls two years ago.