

National Institute  
on MEDIA  
and the FAMILY™



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# MediaWise®

## Watch what your kids watch.

### Tenth Annual Video Game Report Card Released in Washington, DC

On November 29, 2005, Institute President David Walsh was joined by Senator Joe Lieberman to release the 10th Annual MediaWise® Video and Computer Game Report Card. After a decade of research and monitoring by the National Institute on Media and the Family, the Video Game Report Card gives the video game industry a cumulative grade of D+.

"There has been significant industry progress and reforms over the last decade, but ever more violent and sadistic video games are still ending up in the hands of children," said Dr. Walsh. "We feel the Entertainment Software Rating Board, which is owned and operated by the video game industry, is beyond repair and needs to be overhauled. That is why the National Institute on Media and the Family will be convening a Ratings Summit this year with leading parent, health and child welfare groups to recommend video game ratings reform."

Dr. Walsh also raised concerns about the results of the Institute's secret shopper

survey. The survey found that boys as young as 9 years old were able to purchase M-rated video games 42 percent of the time and girls were able to purchase M-rated games 46 percent of the time. In 2004, girls were only able to purchase these games eight percent of the time.

"In 2003, the Interactive Entertainment Merchants Association promised the public they would enforce policies preventing the sale of M-rated video games to children under the age of 17," said Dr. Walsh. "Unfortunately, retailers are not making good on that promise." One exception is Best Buy Corporation, which implemented its policy in 2005 and scored a perfect 100 percent in clerk enforcement in all of the Institute's retail stings.

Other areas of special concern in the Video Game Report Card include: M-rated video games are more popular than ever among students; the widening gap between what kids do and what parents know; and an update on the arcade



Senator Lieberman speaks at the release of 10th Annual MediaWise Video and Computer Game Report Card. Photo courtesy of Senator Lieberman's office.

industry's development, implementation, and enforcement of its rating system. Similar to previous years, the Video Game Report Card also provides parents a list of recommended video games and games to avoid.

### National Institute on Media and the Family Celebrates Ten Years of Making a Difference

In 2006, the National Institute on Media and the Family is celebrating its tenth year as the world's leading and most respected research-based organization focused on the impact of media on children and families. Over the past ten years, the Institute has been building healthy families and communities through the wise use of media.

The Institute's accomplishments during the last ten years include: initiating the popular and widely-covered Annual MediaWise Video and Computer Game Report Card; developing Kid-Score, an easy-to-use ratings system for parents about kids' media; generating calls to action and recommendations for the entertainment industry with positive results for children and families; and creating the MediaWise movement

to help parents everywhere "Watch What Your Kids Watch."

Despite its many accomplishments, the

10th Anniversary

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National Institute on Media and the Family knows its work is not finished. In the coming decade, the Institute is committed to protecting children's health and welfare. The Institute will continue to provide parents, public officials, business leaders, and communities with cutting-edge research, resources, and industry recom-

mendations that help the public understand the impact of media, especially video games, on children's development. The Institute's most important goals for the next decade include: developing a greater body of research on the impact of video games; an independent universal ratings system; bedrooms as "media-free" zones; building MediaWise communities and organizations; and educating parents about the need to supervise their children's media use.

The National Institute on Media and the Family is deeply grateful for all of the support given to it over the past ten years and looks forward to implementing MediaWise during the next ten years.

Visit the new and improved [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org)

## What's New from Switch™

**Switch**, the National Institute on Media and the Family's groundbreaking community health and fitness program, is off to great start in Lakeville, Minnesota and Cedar Rapids, Iowa!

The goal of **Switch** is to promote and increase the health and fitness of third, fourth, and fifth grade children and their families by **Switching** up physical activity; **Switching** on veggies and fruit; and **Switching** down screen time.

Approximately 1,300 families and children in these grades are participating in the program and are beginning to make healthier choices at school, at home,

and in their communities. Each month, parents and children receive tools that make it easier to set goals, track what they do, chew, and view and increase overall family wellness.

**Switch** Lakeville is made possible by the generous support of Fairview, the Medica Foundation and the Healthy and Active America Foundation. **Switch** Cedar Rapids is made possible by the generous support of Cargill and the Healthy and Active America Foundation.

To learn more about

**Switch**, please visit <http://www.mediafamily.org/switch/>.



Randi Callahan, *Switch* Project Manager

## Institute Recognizes the Exemplary Work of Three Service Learning Students!

The Institute would like to recognize the hard work that three University of Minnesota Service Learning Students, Ian MacFarlane, Stephanie Jakoblich, and Daryl Pinto, put into the 2005 Video and Computer Game Report Card. This year's report featured more national surveys than ever before, offering a complete and accurate snapshot of the gaming industry for our tenth anniversary of the report. All three students put in many hours to ensure the surveys were done well -- in addition to helping with Switch and KidScore

when they had a spare moment. We extend a huge thank you to these three capable students for their effort and enthusiasm!

Ian MacFarlane is a senior wrapping up a major in psychology and a minor in family violence prevention.

Stephanie will graduate this May with a degree in family social science and minor in family violence prevention.

Daryl Pinto is a sophomore studying

political science and sociology.



Ian MacFarlane



Stephanie Jakoblich

## MediaWise Profiles

As one of the few female movie reviewers in the Twin Cities area, Linda Thomas provides the National Institute on Media and the Family reviews and family-friendly ratings for movies PG-13 and under. As part of her reviews, Linda rates films using KidScore®, the Institute's innovative content-based ratings system that focuses on age-appropriateness.

Jeremy Gieske is currently a training consultant with the National Institute on Media and the Family. Jeremy initially became involved in the Institute as video game review-

er. As a long-time student of media, especially electronic, Jeremy has been deeply involved with the study and development of media, including the historical, social, and cultural impact of video games.

Go to [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org), click on 'Movie Reviews' to find Linda's reviews and ratings of the latest movies; click on 'Video Game Reviews' to

find Jeremy's.

The National Institute on Media and the Family thanks Linda and Jeremy for their contributions to the MediaWise movement.



## Check out the new and improved MediaWise® Network!

Check out the new MediaWise Network, an online resource from the National Institute on Media and the Family. You may notice that since the last time you were at our Web site things look a little different. That's because we're responding to the changing needs of parents and caregivers by creating more online opportunities for action and interactive resources that enable you to share your ideas and learn from others.

With the MediaWise Network you will still have access to the MediaWise Action Guide and Action Kits and coming soon:

- New ideas on how to bring the MediaWise message to your community.
- Write your own movie and video game reviews and ratings.
- Search for other Network members in your area.
- Share your ideas and solutions with other parents on online message boards. Let other parents know when you watch a great movie for kids!
- Online polls that let you know what other Network members think.
- New action kits available only to members of the MediaWise Network.

Click on "Take Action!" at [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org) to register and get started today. Remember to keep checking back in -- we are creating new materials right now!

**\*\*Please note that if you signed up for the MediaWise Network before November 28, 2005, you will need to sign up again in order to access the new site. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we promise it is worth it!**

## You can help us help families

Future research and outreach efforts would not be possible without continued support. The Institute accepts donations via mail, telephone, and online:

606 24th Avenue South, Suite 606

Minneapolis, MN, 55454

1-888-672-5437 • [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org)

**Mediawise**

EDITOR: Monica Walsh

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National Institute on Media and the Family  
606 24th Avenue South, Suite 606, Minneapolis, MN 55454  
Toll-free 888.672.5437 Fax 612.672.4113  
Web site [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org)

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The Institute's mission is to maximize the benefits and minimize the harm of media on children and families through research, education, and advocacy.