

Common Sense Media - Family Friendly Reviews



Newsletter

Fri, Nov 04, 2005

## Video/DVD

### Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith

 11+

★★★★

Anakin Skywalker begins his journey to the Dark Side.

[More...](#)

## Video Game

### Bob the Builder: Bob's Busy Day

 4+

★★★★

Fun and educational VSmile Pocket game. Best for the littlest gamers.

[More...](#)

## Music

### I Am Me

 11+

★★

Self-absorption set to music -- innocuous but boring.

[More...](#)

## Film

### Saw II

 17+

★

Gruesome and explicit -- not for kids.

[More...](#)

## Book

### Down the Rabbit Hole

 10+

★★★

Teen girl solves local murder by lying to everyone.

[More...](#)

## A Common Sense View: Do-It-Yourself Media

by Courtney Macavinta and Andrea Vander Pluym



*Here's an article to clip out and give to your kids and teens. In RESPECT: A Girl's Guide to Getting Respect & Dealing When Your Line Is Crossed, Courtney Macavinta and Andrea Vander Pluym teach teens to become more media savvy, even giving them tips to becoming homegrown media moguls:*

When a group of girls from Boston got tired of hearing songs about women as sex objects or victims, they decided to take action. They came up with the idea of creating a radio station by and for girls. With some help from a youth media organization, they took their case all the way to the city mayor.

The mayor was impressed, and the girls were given the green light to set up their radio station, R-LOG (540 AM), which they operate from their school. For three hours each day, R-LOG spins records that don't slam women, and conducts interviews and phone-ins about issues girls care about.

Have you ever thought about creating your own media as an alternative to what's out there? Imagine what you'd like to read, view, and listen to – then venture into do-it-yourself media. Here's how:

**Get writing.** Contribute your own stories to magazines. To try to get published, write a quick summary of your proposed article, making sure to start your pitch with a catchy paragraph that identifies a problem or your take on a news trend. Then send it to the magazine's main editor and see what happens. To find the address of a magazine, look in the opening pages where the masthead -- the list of editors and staff -- is located.

**Get creative.** You can record your own songs or edit digital film on most computers these days. You can even start your own talk show on public access cable. And you don't need tons of cash to start your own Web site, blog, or zine that talks about your life and the issues that you and your friends deal with. Send the link to your friends and try to get the traditional media to write about your indie project for publicity and to drive people to your site.

**Get support.** Need help getting started? The [Center for Media](#)

Literacy has tons of how-tos on creating your own media, from magazines to documentaries and news programs.

*Adapted from Respect by Courtney Macavinta and Andrea Vander Pluym © 2005. Used with permission of Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 1-866-703-7322; www.freespirit.com. All rights reserved.*

### New in Theaters: **Chicken Little**

Cute, colorful, and mostly lively. Fun for grade-schoolers. Not Pixar quality but this familiar story is fine for a rainy day. Parents should know, however, that for a kids' film, this one features prominent and repeated images of mayhem. Its opening sequence, which shows citizens running around in a panic and screaming, is somewhat frantic; it might be a bit too intense for some sensitive younger viewers. While much of the action is benign and cartoonish (crowds in a panic, animal children playing aggressive dodgeball or baseball and falling from windows), the film ends up with an alien invasion, with giant tripods and creatures inspired by War of the Worlds, and some potentially scary Predator or Aliens style music. One character is readable as "gay," as he adores disco and cowers before his mother, and another, a tough, baseball-playing female fox, is transformed into a traditional girly-girl, as a partly jokey reinforcement of traditional gender roles.



On 7+  
★★★★

[More...](#)

### New in Theaters: **Jarhead**

The frankly intelligent and beautifully bleak JARHEAD adapts Anthony Swofford's brilliant 2003 memoir of his experience during Desert Storm. A war movie with very little conventional "war" in it, it focuses on the ways that authorities rationalize war "scenarios" and train troops to carry out orders that are, on their face, irrational and costly. Parents need to know that that this movie is not appropriate for kids. It includes frequent scenes of violence, including shooting (at targets and people), hazing rituals, fights, explosions, and grueling training exercises. The film shows frequent images of carcasses (burned and broken along the Gulf



II 17+  
★★★★

war's infamous Highway of Death). Characters curse relentlessly, smoke cigarettes, drink, and do drugs. The troops also engage in frank sex talk (including slang for genitals and masturbation) and gestures; the film includes a brief glimpse at the protagonist's parents in a hotel bed, and scenes from a homemade porn movie.

[More...](#)

### Holiday Must-Have Media

Think the holidays are still a long time off? Think again. The previews for the big end-of-the-year movies, like *King Kong* and *Narnia*, are already showing. And we bet your kids are already hard at work making their list of must-have media.

So what CDs, video games, and DVDs are they asking for? Let us know what titles are topping their lists -- or what you're looking forward to enjoying with your family.

[Contact us](#) to submit a suggestion -- or to send us questions or concerns about a holiday release.



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