

# PARENTING EDUCATION & SUPPORT FORUM

Vanessa Brand  
Head of Public Service Broadcasting Policy Branch

DCMS  
2-4 Cockspur St  
London SW1Y 5DH

July 24<sup>th</sup> 2001

Dear Ms Brand,

## **BBC Proposed new digital services**

We are writing to express our support for the BBC proposal to develop two children's channels. The Parenting Education & Support Forum is the national umbrella body of people who work with parents. Our members working in the health, education and voluntary sectors are in daily contact with parents and are familiar with their concerns and point of view.

We think it is important that the BBC develop its children's channels for two main reasons. It is important that the material on offer will be British made and will reflect the daily life of the young viewers. This is significant for the language development of the younger viewers and for building the self-esteem and cultural pride of all age groups.

We are also very anxious that children should have access to as many channels as possible which are free of advertising. Parents feel pressured to buy what children see advertised on TV. The Forum carried out a research project into parents, children and the media in 1998, "Family Viewing." (copy in post.) 72% of parents felt that the media put pressure on them to buy things for their children; 62% of participants felt the media influenced what children buy for themselves. The sense of pressure from the media rose as the children got older. Rather than an increase in advertising pressure on children and parents, we would wish to see Britain move towards the example of European countries like Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden where restrictions governing all channels successfully operate on advertising directed at children. In the meantime we strongly support the development of two new advertisement-free BBC children's channels.

Finally we are keen that the BBC have the opportunity to develop more high quality programmes like Blue Peter, Playdays and Teletubbies which have taught and delighted generations of children.

We strongly urge that BBC be given permission to go ahead with its two new channels.

Yours sincerely



Mary Crowley  
Chief Executive

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