

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

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Mr. Steve Burke
President & Chief Operating Officer
Comcast Cable Communications
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CCFC
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Dear Mr. Burke:

We are writing to urge you to not carry BabyFirstTV, the first television station for babies, on Comcast Cable. The network, which until now has been available only on satellite TV is working to expand its reach to cable.¹ BabyFirstTV is the subject of a Federal Trade Commission complaint for false and deceptive marketing. The complaint, filed by the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, is under review.

BabyFirstTV seduces potential subscribers with false claims that its programming is educational for infants. **There is no evidence that television is beneficial for babies and growing concern that it may be harmful.** A recent study found that the mistaken belief that programming is educational and/or good for brain development is the number one reason why parents allow babies to watch television and DVDs.² If Comcast Cable provides BabyFirstTV with a platform, you will be profiting from this deception.

BabyFirstTV claims that it "... goes above and beyond traditional TV – it is an educational tool that provides a positive learning environment"³ for babies as young as six months.⁴ The slogan, "Watch your baby blossom," implies that its programming encourages infants' development--that watching BabyFirstTV will help babies grow and develop.⁵

BabyFirstTV even claims that specific programs are designed to develop different skills; it uses a color-coded system labeling system which "helps inform parents about the educational value of each segment." For example, yellow indicates "Thinking Journey" programs, which "[e]ngage children in identifying patterns of thinking and developing creative ways of viewing the world." Orange indicates "Feeling Garden" programs which "[e]xpose children to basic social skills and learning how to relate to others."⁶



BabyFirstTV provides no research to support any of its claims and some have been disproved. For instance, BabyFirstTV states that “[e]ducational television programming has been associated with very positive results such as improvements in vocabulary.”⁷ For babies, this claim is patently false. Studies show that television is not an effective means of teaching babies and toddlers the meaning of new words or for promoting their phonetic learning.⁸ In addition, BabyFirstTV recommends its “Rainbow Dreams” series for babies before bedtime, but research suggests that television interferes with regular sleep patterns.⁹

BabyFirstTV claims that television is not harmful to babies¹⁰ and does not cite any studies that raise concern about the possible harms. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under two.¹¹