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AUTHOR Bertram, Charles L.
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ABSTRACT

This study compared the parental appeal of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory's television program, "Around the Bend," with "Captain Kangaroo" and "Romper Room." Data was solicited from 150 parents of children in each of the three treatment groups of the Early Childhood Education Program: (1) children who observed the television program only; (2) those who watched the program and were visited at home once weekly by a paraprofessional; and (3) those receiving the TV program and the home visits, who were also exposed once a week to a mobile classroom. The survey forms were designed to determine which programs were viewed by the children, if parents watched the programs with the children, if parents thought the children enjoyed and/or learned from the programs, and if parents thought the different programs were good for the children. Parents were asked to rate the programs from the best to the very worst and give the program sponsors' names. Eighty-one percent of the 150 parents to whom forms were mailed responded. "Around the Bend" was rated best by 51% of the parents; "Captain Kangaroo," by 38% and "Romper Room," by 11%. The ratings varied among the parents of children in different treatment groups. Many of the children watched two or more children's programs each day. Many parents watched the programs with their children and felt that instructional television combined with home visits was an acceptable procedure for early childhood education. A summary of the AEL Early Childhood Program is available as PS 004 889. (Author/AJ)

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A COMPARISON OF PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AEL'S AROUND
THE BEND AND OTHER CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMS

Technical Report No. 10

Division of Research and Evaluation
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
Charleston, West Virginia

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A COMPARISON OF PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AEL'S AROUND
THE BEND AND OTHER CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMS*

The purpose of this study was to determine how the AEL-produced television program, Around the Bend, compared in parental appeal with other children's television programs. Data were gathered from parents of children in the Early Childhood Education Program.

DESCRIPTION OF METHOD

A survey form was designed to measure difference in parental attitude toward the following children's television programs: Mister Rogers, Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, AEL's Around the Bend (which was not in color as were the other programs), and Sesame Street. The form is included as Attachment 10-1 to this report. (Unfortunately, Sesame Street and Mister Rogers did not become available in the viewing area in time to be included in the survey.) The form was designed to determine which programs were being viewed by the children, if the parents watched the programs with their children, if the parents thought the children enjoyed and/or learned anything from the different television programs, and if the parents thought the different programs were "good" for their children. In addition, the television programs were rated by the parents from the "very best program to the very worst program," and the parents were asked to give the program sponsors' names.

The parental attitude survey form was mailed to a random sample of 105 parents of children in three different treatment groups of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. The three different treatment groups were (1) those three-, four-, and five-year-old children who observed AEL's thirty-minute television program each day (TV only), (2) the 150 children

*This report was written by Dr. Charles L. Bertram, Director, Research and Evaluation.

who watched the television program each day and whose home was visited once each week by a paraprofessional home visitor (TV-HV), and (3) the 150 children who observed the television program, were visited by the home visitor, and were exposed to a mobile classroom once each week. A more complete description of the treatments and treatment groups is given in the summary section of the 1969-70 Early Childhood Education Evaluation Report.

A random sub-sample of 35 children was selected from each of the three treatment groups, for a total sample of 105 children. The one restriction on the sampling was that a maximum of one child from each household was selected. The survey forms (see Attachment 10-1) were mailed in the spring of 1970 to the parents of the randomly selected children. They were mailed using the letterhead of the Department of Human Resources at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia* in an attempt to eliminate possible bias caused by AEL asking for an opinion about an AEL product.

The survey forms were mailed a second time to parents who did not respond after an interval of two weeks. As a result of the second mailing, a 65 percent response to the survey form was obtained. Postcards were mailed after an additional month (see Attachment 10-2) as a reminder and to possibly obtain at least some limited information as a substitute for the survey data. Enough additional survey forms were returned with the cards to raise the response rate to 81 percent. Table 10-1 indicates the effective number of respondents from each treatment group. The greater proportion of returns by the Package group was possibly due to additional involvement in the program.

*The cooperation of Dr. Frank Hooper, then of the Department of Human Resources at West Virginia University, is appreciated.

TABLE 10-1

3

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF PARENTS OF ECE CHILDREN
BY TREATMENT GROUP WHO RESPONDED
TO THE TELEVISION SURVEY FORM

Treatment Group	Forms Mailed	No. Returned	Percent Response
Package	35	33	94.3
Home Visitor	35	27	77.1
TV Only	<u>35</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>71.4</u>
Total	105	85	81.0

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The most discriminating results were provided by a tabulation of the forced choice responses on the reverse side of the survey form. The parents were asked to "rank the programs from the very best to the very worst program" by placing a 1 by the program they "liked the very best," a 2 by the one liked next best, and so forth. Since Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers were not received in the area, a one-two-three ranking of Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, and Around the Bend was obtained. This ranking for all ECE parents sampled is shown in Table 10-2. A Chi-square analysis was completed to determine the level of significance of differences in the number of first place ratings received by the different programs.

TABLE 10-2

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACE
RATINGS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

Rating	<u>Captain Kangaroo</u>		<u>Romper Room</u>		<u>Around the Bend</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	32	38.09	9	10.71	44	51.19
2	39	46.42	19	22.62	26	30.95
3	13	15.47	57	66.66	15	17.85

Note: $\chi^2_v = 22.329$ $P < .001$.

(first place ratings only)

According to Table 10-2, approximately 38 percent of the parents placed Captain Kangaroo first, 11 percent placed Romper Room first, and 51 percent thought AEL's Around the Bend was the "best." In contrast, 15 percent gave the lowest rating to Captain Kangaroo, 67 percent to Romper Room, and 18 percent to Around the Bend. The percent of first place ratings for each television program are shown graphically as Figure 10-1.

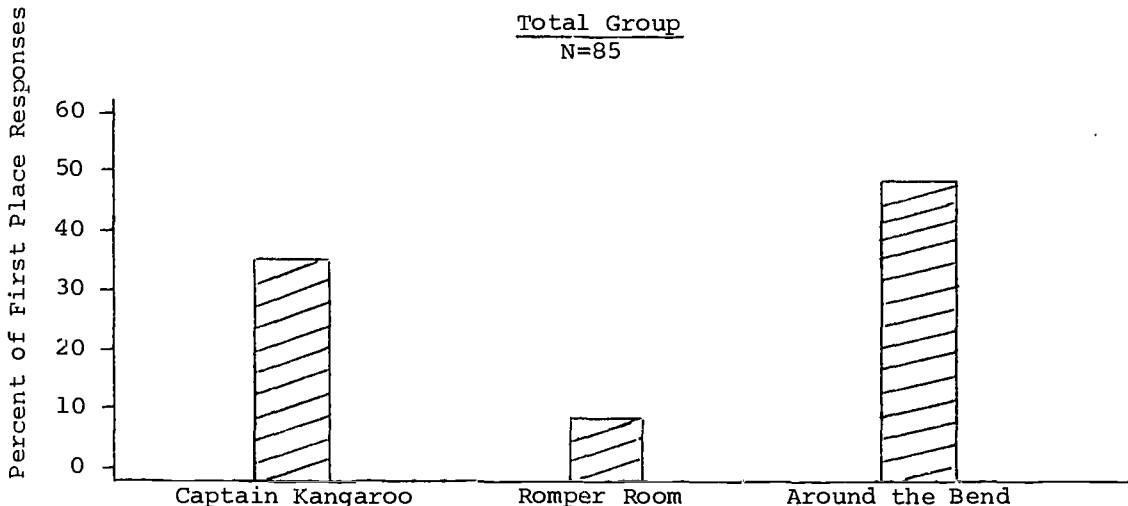


FIGURE 10-1

PERCENT OF FIRST PLACE RATINGS BY PARENTS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

As shown in Table 10-3, the Package group parents tended to rate Captain Kangaroo higher than Around the Bend (48 percent to 39 percent). Otherwise, the pattern of responses is the same as described for the total group. The "Package" group is the one which received the television program, the home visitor and the mobile facility. The percent of first place responses for each program is depicted as Figure 10-2.

TABLE 10-3

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACE RATINGS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

Package Group Only
N=33

Rating	<u>Captain Kangaroo</u>		<u>Romper Room</u>		<u>Around the Bend</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	16	48.48	4	12.12	13	39.39
2	12	36.36	6	18.18	15	45.45
3	5	15.15	23	69.69	5	15.15

NOTE: $\chi^2_v = 7.090$, $P < .40$. (first place ratings only)

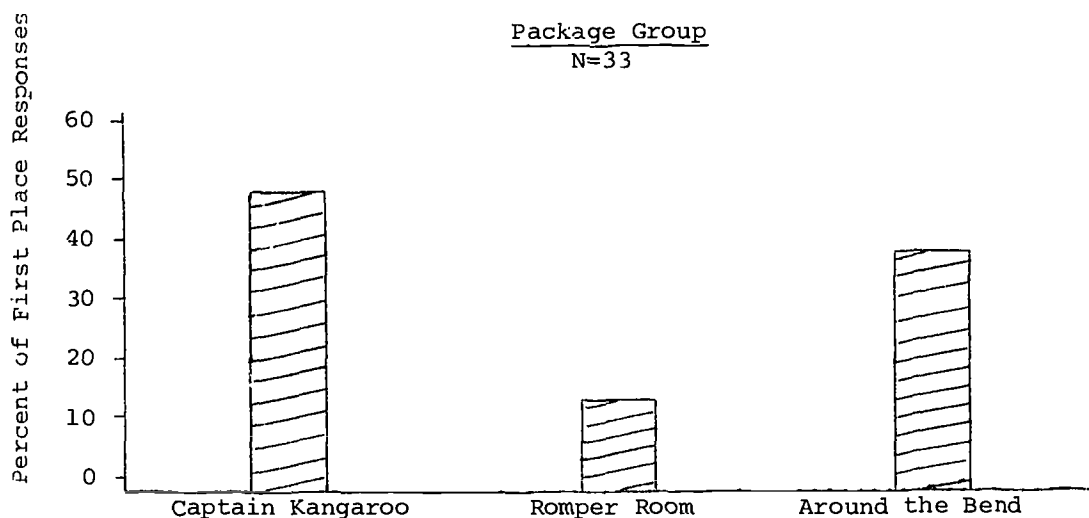


FIGURE 10-2

PERCENT OF FIRST PLACE RATINGS BY PARENTS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

The 27 parents of the treatment group who had received the television program reinforced by the home visitors gave the highest rating to Around the Bend as opposed to Captain Kangaroo (74 percent to 27 percent, see Table 10-4). Figure 10-3 indicates the differences in first place ratings.

TABLE10-4

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACE
RATINGS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM,
AND AROUND THE BEND

TV-Home Visitor Group Only

N=27

Rating	<u>Captain Kangaroo</u>		<u>Romper Room</u>		<u>Around the Bend</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	6	22.22	1	3.70	20	74.07
2	17	62.96	4	14.81	6	22.22
3	4	14.81	22	81.48	1	3.70

NOTE: $\chi^2_v = 21.555$, $P < .001$. (first place ratings only)

TV-Home Visitor Group Only

N=27

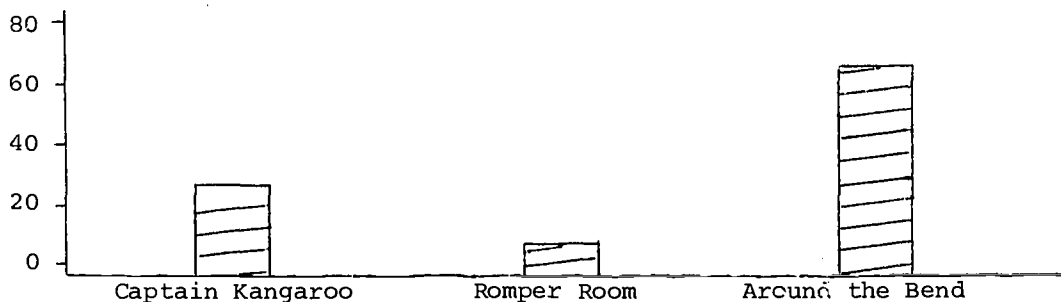


FIGURE10-3

PERCENT OF FIRST PLACE RATINGS BY PARENTS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

The group which received only the television program with no reinforcement ranked Captain Kangaroo and Around the Bend the same (42 percent), and gave Romper Room 17 percent of the first place ratings (Table 10-5). However, they gave Around the Bend 38 percent of the worst ratings as opposed to 17 percent for Captain Kangaroo and 46 percent for Romper Room.

TABLE 10-5

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACE RATINGS FOR CAPTAIN KANGAROO, ROMPER ROOM, AND AROUND THE BEND

Television Only Group
N=25

Rating	<u>Captain Kangaroo</u>		<u>Romper Room</u>		<u>Around the Bend</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	10	41.66	4	16.66	10	41.66
2	10	41.66	9	37.50	5	20.83
3	4	16.66	11	45.83	9	37.50

NOTE: $\chi^2_v = 3.000$, $P < .30$. (first place ratings only)

The responses to the first ten questions of the survey were not as discriminative as the one just described, and they are tabulated as Table 10-6.

TABLE 10-6

PERCENT OF YES AND NO/DON'T KNOW RESPONSES TO FIRST TEN QUESTIONS OF SURVEY FORM ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT TELEVISION PROGRAMS*

Question No.	<u>Captain Kangaroo</u>		<u>Romper Room</u>		<u>Around the Bend</u>	
	Yes	No/Don't Know	Yes	No/Don't Know	Yes	No/Don't Know
1	100.0		100.0		100.0	
2	100.0		100.0		100.0	
3	97.1	2.9	82.2	17.8	98.5	1.5
4	83.6	16.4	75.0	25.0	97.0	3.0
5	76.2	23.8	70.0	30.0	89.3	10.7
6	95.6	4.4	96.5	3.5	98.5	1.5
7	88.1	11.9	76.9	21.4/1.7	92.4	7.6
8	95.6	4.4	93.0	3.5/3.5	95.5	3.0/1.5
9	95.7	2.9/1.4	96.7	0.0/3.3	93.9	1.5/4.6
10	91.1	8.9	89.3	10.7	93.9	6.1

*See Attachment 10-1 for the wording of the questions. The number of respondents was approximately 85 for each question.

The responses to Question 1 and 2 indicated that all parents had seen and did receive Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, and Around the Bend. Almost all the children had watched the programs (97, 82, and 98 percent respectively),

and most of the children watched the programs as many as three times a week (Question 4). About three-fourths of the parents watched the program with the children, except in the case of Around the Bend where 89 percent of the parents also watched the program. More than 95 percent of the parents reported that their children enjoyed each of the three programs (Question 6), and many of the parents said that they themselves enjoyed the programs (Question 7). Practically all the parents said their children learned from the programs (Question 8) and that the program was good for their children (Question 9). Almost all of them encouraged their children to watch the program. Omissions of responses to Questions 5 and 7 were tabulated in the no/don't know category.

The last question on the survey form required that the parents identify the sponsors. One purpose was to determine possible appeal to commercial advertisers. So few persons knew the sponsors that the question was not tabulated. Only one of the first 30 respondents had correctly identified the sponsors.

A comparison of parents' attitudes toward Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, and AEL's Around the Bend has been presented in the tables, graphics, and explanations in the previous sections of this report. Before further explanation is given a few qualifying statements need to be made regarding the intent and accuracy of this survey.

The survey was not intended to be a general audience rating of the three television programs; it was intended to survey the attitudes of parents whose children were involved to differing degrees with AEL's Early Childhood Education Program. Most of the parents, especially those in the Package and TV-HV treatment groups, were familiar with AEL's instructional television program and were encouraged to watch it with their children.

Also, there could have been some bias due to the fact that the parents knew that "their program" was on trial. Every effort was made to play this down, but the ECE program has received considerable attention in the rural section of West Virginia where the children live.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following generalizations are abstracted from the previous analyses:

1. The noncommercial instructional television program, Around the Bend, is generally rated as good as or better than children's commercial television programs by the parents of children in the Early Childhood Education Program. The total sample of parents gave the highest rating to Around the Bend 51 percent of the time, to Captain Kangaroo 38 percent of the time, and to Romper Room 11 percent of the time. Much of the appeal of Around the Bend possibly resulted from encouragement received from the home visitors for parents to watch the program with their children. The parents of children who did not receive the home visitors or the mobile facility, i.e., only the television program, gave both Captain Kangaroo and Around the Bend 42 percent of the first place ratings, and Romper Room 17 percent of the first place ratings. In general, Around the Bend, which was produced by the ECE Curriculum Materials Team, was received with considerable favor by the parents of children in the ECE program.
2. The parents of children who received Around the Bend and a home visitor gave higher ratings to Around the Bend than (1) the parents of children who received only the television program and (2) the parents of children who received the television program, the home visitor, and the mobile facility. The parents of the TV-HV group gave Around the Bend 74 percent of the first place ratings. The TV only group gave Around the Bend 42 percent of the first place ratings, and the Package group gave Around the Bend 39 percent of the first place ratings. The lower percentage for the Package group is surprising since they supposedly received the same treatment as the TV-HV group, plus accessibility to the mobile instructional facility once each week. A possible explanation is that those parents who received only the home visitor tended to put more dependence in the instructional television program. Conversely, the parents of the children in

the Package group may have tended to assume that sufficient instruction was obtained from the mobile instructional facility and, therefore, to have shown less interest in the television program. There is also the possibility that the home visitors may unconsciously try harder with parents whose children do not have the benefit of the mobile facility.

3. Many of the three-, four-, and five-year-old children watched two or more children's television programs each day. Between 75 and 97 percent of the children watched the different television programs three or more times a week. The parents reported that 84 percent of the children watched Captain Kangaroo three or more times a week, 75 percent watched Romper Room three or more times a week, and 97 percent watched Around the Bend three or more times a week. These data indicate that there is a ready-made audience for instruction via television, and many children will watch two or three children's television programs each day.
4. Many parents watch the children's television programs with their children. According to the parents, 76 percent of them watch Captain Kangaroo, 70 percent watch Romper Room, and 89 percent watch Around the Bend with their children. About 95 percent of the parents thought that their children learned from these programs.
5. As far as parental attitudes are concerned, instructional television combined with home visits from paraprofessionals is an acceptable procedure for early childhood education. The parents reported that the children watched the television programs, that they themselves watched the television programs, that both they and their children enjoyed the television programs, and that they thought their children learned from watching these television programs.

Survey of Parental Attitude Toward Television Form

Information About Your Children

EXAMPLE: If your child is a son 3 years old, you would mark:
 0. Boy Girl Age

- 1. Boy Girl Age
- 2. Boy Girl Age
- 3. Boy Girl Age
- 4. Boy Girl Age
- 5. Boy Girl Age
- 6. Boy Girl Age
- 7. Boy Girl Age

Place an "X" in the proper box.
 EXAMPLE:
 0. Are you a parent? Yes No

- 1. Do you have television? Yes No
 (If "no" stop here)
- 2. Do you have children? Yes No
 (If "no" stop here)
- 3. Is your television connected to a cable? Yes No

THE REST OF THE INFORMATION WILL DEAL WITH CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 3 AND 6

	MISTER ROGERS		CAPTAIN KANGAROO		ROMPER ROOM		AROUND THE BEND		SESAME STREET		
	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Don't know	
EXAMPLE: 0. Are these television programs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Have you ever seen these programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Can you receive these programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do your children ever watch these programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do they watch the programs 3 or more times a week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you watch or sit in the room when they watch these programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do the children enjoy the programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you enjoy the programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do your children learn from the programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are these programs good for your children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do you encourage your children to watch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



RANK the programs from the very best program to the worst program. Place a "1" next to the program you like the very best, a "2" next to the one you like next best, and so on.

CAPTAIN KANGAROO _____
 ROMPER ROOM _____
 AROUND THE BEND _____
 SESAME STREET _____
 MR. ROGERS _____

EXAMPLE:
 Going to a movie 1 (best)
 Going to the dentist 3 (worst)
 Going to school 2 (next best)

Place the sponsor's name in the blank next to the program.

CAPTAIN KANGAROO _____
 ROMPER ROOM _____
 AROUND THE BEST _____
 SESAME STREET _____
 MR. ROGERS _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION. PLEASE RETURN THE FORM IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.
 PLEASE CHECK BELOW IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE THE EDUCATIONAL 14-PAGE SAFETY COLORING BOOK AS OUR GIFT TO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN. (Allow 3 weeks for delivery).

YES _____ NO _____

Name _____
 Address _____

ATTACHMENT10-2

Postcard Survey of Parental Attitude

Circle which program is
BEST, NEXT BEST, WORST

Check if your children
watch 3 or more times a
week.

Captain Kangaroo: Best, Next Best, Worst _____

Romper Room: Best, Next Best, Worst _____

Around the Bend: Best, Next Best, Worst _____

Name _____

Address _____
