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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Most Parents Encourage their Kids to Follow the News

GROWING UP WITH THE NEWS

In an era where the news is often dominated by war, tragedy and scandal, America's parents are more likely to encourage their children to follow the news than they are to shield them from it. Among parents with school-aged children (kindergarten through 12th grade), six-in-ten (61%) say they often or sometimes encourage their children to follow the news. Fewer parents (47%) often or sometimes try to shield their kids from the news, while nearly four-in-ten (38%) say they never do so.

Even so, most school-aged children are not regular news consumers. According to their parents, only 6% of today's kids follow news about national and international issues very closely and 23% follow the news fairly closely. The vast majority don't follow the news too closely or at all.

The news sources children rely on are almost identical to the sources adults use, with television the dominant medium. Among those parents who say that their school-aged children pay at least some attention to national or international news, a 31% plurality say their kids' main news source is network television news, while 24% say their kids rely mainly on cable TV news. Some 18% say their kids' main news source is the internet. Only 10% of kids

Kids and the News	
Based on Parents of School-Aged Children*	
	<u>Percent</u>
<i>How closely do your children follow news about national and international issues?</i>	
Very closely	6
Fairly closely	23
Not too closely	30
Not at all closely	40
DK/Refused	<u>1</u>
	100
<i>How often do you encourage your children to follow the news?</i>	
Often	29
Sometimes	32
Seldom	17
Never	21
DK/Refused	<u>1</u>
	100
<i>How often do you try to shield your children from the news?</i>	
Often	24
Sometimes	23
Seldom	14
Never	38
DK/Refused	<u>1</u>
	100
* School-aged refers to children attending school including kindergarten through 12 th grade.	

rely on newspapers and 9% tune into radio news. Adults rely on the same set of news sources with network and cable TV news clearly dominating.

Not surprisingly, parents' own news interests have an impact on whether or not they encourage their children to follow the news. Parents who are disengaged from the news of the day are less likely than other parents to encourage their offspring to follow the news. Among those parents who paid the least attention to the major political stories of the past two weeks – the war in Iraq, the Iraq policy debate and the 2008 presidential campaign – only 43% often or sometimes encourage their children to watch the news. Fully 39% never encourage their kids to do so. Among those who were moderately or highly interested in these stories, more than 70% often or sometimes encourage their children to watch the news.

Parents Interests Influence Kids' Habits			
Based on Parents of School-Aged Children			
	<i>News Attentiveness</i>		
	<u>High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>
<i>How often do you encourage your children to follow the news?</i>	%	%	%
Often	44	38	10
Sometimes	27	34	33
Seldom	14	19	18
Never	12	9	39
DK/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100

News attentiveness is based on how closely the parents followed news about the situation in Iraq, the Iraq policy debate and the 2008 presidential campaign.

Also as expected, parents of older children, particularly teenagers, are much more likely to encourage their kids to follow the news than are parents of young children. Among those parents who have children ages 12-17 living in their household, fully 71% often or sometimes encourage their kids to follow the news. This compares with 62% of parents with kids between the ages of 6 and 11 and only 50% of parents with kids under age 6.

Teens Encouraged, Young Children Shielded			
Based on Parents of School-Aged Children			
	<i>Ages of children in household</i>		
	<u>Under 6</u>	<u>6-11</u>	<u>12-17</u>
<i>How often do you encourage your children to follow the news?</i>	%	%	%
Often	19	26	41
Sometimes	31	36	30
Seldom	18	20	18
Never	32	18	11
DK/Refused	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100
<i>How often do you try to shield your children from the news?</i>			
Often	30	27	14
Sometimes	25	30	20
Seldom	15	12	17
Never	29	30	49
DK/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100

By the same token, young children are more often shielded from reports of today's happenings on the local, national and international scenes. Among those parents with children under age 12 living in their household, more than half often or sometimes shield their kids from the news. This compares with only 34% of parents with children ages 12-17 in the household.

Half of these parents (49%) say they never shield their children from the news.

In spite of the fact that Republicans are generally much more critical of the news media than are Democrats, Republican parents are just as likely as Democratic parents to encourage their children to watch the news (65% vs. 62%, respectively). Independents are slightly less likely to encourage their kids to watch the news. When it comes to shielding children from the news, again there are no major party differences – 48% of Republican parents and 50% of Democratic parents often or sometimes shield their children from the news.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly *News Interest Index*, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. This week's report is based, in part, on interviews with 435 parents of school-aged children conducted during the first two weekends of May, 2007. The News Interest Index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis.

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of six projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY 4-7, 2007 & MAY 11-14, 2007 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=2,037 ADULTS; 435 PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Q.5 Are you the parent or guardian of any children under 18 now living in your household?

33	Yes
67	No
*	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF 'YES,' ASK [N=539]:

Q.6 And how many children do you have living in your household that are attending school, including kindergarten through 12th grade?

21	None
36	One
42	More than one
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF ONE OR MORE IN Q.6 (Q.6=2-3), ASK [N=435]:

Q.7 Thinking about your school-age (child/children), how closely (does he or she/do they) follow news about national and international issues **[READ]**?

6	Very closely
23	Fairly closely
30	Not too closely
40	Not at all closely
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF 1-3 IN Q.7, ASK [N=269]:

Q.8 Which would you say is (his or her/their) main source for news about national and international issues **[READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**?

10	Newspapers
31	Network television news, such as ABC, CBS or NBC
24	Cable news channels such as CNN or the Fox News Channel
9	Radio
18	The internet
7	[DO NOT READ] Some other
<u>1</u>	[DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK ALL PARENTS WITH SCHOOL AGE KIDS (Q.6=2-3) [N=435]:

ROTATE Q.9/10

Q.9 How often, if ever, do you encourage your children to follow the news **[READ]**?

29	Often
32	Sometimes
17	Seldom
21	Never
<u>1</u>	[DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.10 How often, if ever, do you try to shield your children from the news **[READ]**?

24	Often
23	Sometimes
14	Seldom
38	Never
<u>1</u>	[DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused
100	