

Written Statement of Ms. Cyma Zarghami  
President of Nickelodeon and the MTV Networks Kids & Family Group

Before the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
of the United States Senate

“Rethinking the Children's Television Act for a Digital Media Age”

July 22, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchison for inviting me to be a part of today’s hearing. My name is Cyma Zarghami, and I am President of Nickelodeon and the MTV Networks Kids & Family Group. I am proud to say that I have been with Nickelodeon for 24 years, beginning as a data entry clerk, and now work on a wide range of programs including *Dora The Explorer*, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Rugrats* and Bill Cosby’s *Little Bill*. I’ve also worked on our pro-social initiatives, such as our Kids Pick the President Campaign. During my time at Nickelodeon, I have watched the American family change and our networks grow in amazing and important ways. So I am excited to share our story with the Committee this afternoon.

Nickelodeon’s Kids and Family Group is comprised of four television networks: the flagship Nickelodeon channel; Noggin, The N, and Nicktoons.<sup>1</sup> The Group also includes online, digital, consumer products and recreation businesses focused on children and families.

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<sup>1</sup> Nickelodeon has announced plans to rename Noggin as Nick Jr. and The N as TeenNick on September 28, 2009.

Nickelodeon was launched 30 years ago and it has been the #1 rated cable network for the past 15 years, reaching over 98 million American households. It is the most widely distributed channel in the world and can be viewed in over 175 countries. Evenings on Nickelodeon are called Nick-at-Nite and feature family-friendly fare like the Emmy-winning *Malcolm In the Middle* and *The George Lopez Show*, which our research shows many children co-view with their parents. Mornings on Nickelodeon feature educational programming for pre-schoolers.

In 1999, in partnership with Sesame Workshop, we launched Noggin, initially as a 12 hour per day channel for pre-schoolers. Now, the channel provides commercial-free programming for pre-schoolers 24 hours per day, seven days a week. *Every program that appears on Noggin, 24 hours per day, is educational/informational content specifically designed to serve the needs of pre-school children.* We do this without any government requirement (and without accepting traditional commercial advertisements) – not because we have to, but because it's the right thing to do for kids and their families. We take great pride in serving pre-schoolers and offering content that is curriculum-based and of the highest quality. Today, Noggin ranks as parents' favorite media brand for pre-schoolers.

In addition to Nickelodeon and Noggin, we also program Nicktoons, our home to animated programs, and The N, a network for teens.

At the outset I want to say that Nickelodeon is 100% focused on children. At our core, we believe that what's good for kids is good for business, and that has been a guiding principle of our company ever since its inception. Our company was

founded *for* kids; the founders saw children watching television and, because there were so few options, too many were watching adult programming. So we created an environment on television where kids could be kids, and where they could relax and escape from the pressures of being a kid in a grown-up world. We made a promise that day 30 years ago, and we have kept it ever since, even as we have expanded our mission to serve children at every age level. The Nickelodeon channels respect kids of all ages and tell real children's stories about real issues and real events worthy of celebration. At the same time, we also work hard to make sure that parents feel comfortable having their children learn, grow and be entertained by us. In the past 30 years, we have witnessed a generation of kids who grew up watching Nickelodeon become parents themselves, and we take great pride in knowing that these parents now can share our content with their own children.

We also recognize, as we hope the Committee does, that the media marketplace has undergone profound changes since Nickelodeon was launched 30 years ago. When I came to Nickelodeon, the latchkey kid phenomenon had just begun and there was a far smaller percentage of divorced and two wage-earner families. Kids programming was largely limited to Saturday mornings, Cartoon Network did not exist and you still had to get off the couch to change the channel.

American families today have tremendous demands on their time and consume media entertainment in vastly different ways. These families not only have access to traditional broadcast stations and cable channels, but also to an enormous array of programming via video-on-demand, through home video sales and rentals, on mobile phones, and through a multitude of Internet sites. Families today can watch a Nickelodeon program at its scheduled time on television; order a show from

video-on-demand; view a video stream on the Internet; download or watch a favorite episode from iTunes or Netflix; watch a show on their mobile phone; and use a digital video recorder to store scores if not hundreds of hours of self-selected programming, literally creating a personalized video-on-demand service unique to their preferences.

In May of this year, Nickelodeon ranked # 1 in video-on-demand for kids' programming, with families viewing more than 24 million Nickelodeon programs on-demand in a single month. Families watched an additional 11 million Nick Jr. and Noggin programs on-demand in May. And that's to say nothing of the millions of streams of Nickelodeon video content that families enjoyed on the Internet. Clearly, young children cannot order on-demand content alone; parents are using technology to engage in co-viewing and to *choose* what they want their children to watch.

The advent of these new technologies has been a tremendous boon to parents, whose lives are made easier because they have more tools to determine what video content their children can see and when they can see it. From the v-chip to cable and satellite set top boxes, parents now have the ability to control the video environment in their homes. All of the programming on Nickelodeon's channels is rated pursuant to the TV ratings guidelines, and Nickelodeon has been a proud participant in The TV Boss campaign to educate parents about parental control technologies.

Importantly, children's content has flourished on cable and satellite television, as well as on these technologies, precisely because the marketplace has largely been free of government interference.

Of course, none of this would be possible without compelling content. When you turn on Noggin or Nickelodeon, what you will see is one of our award winning shows. It might be *Dora the Explorer* or *NiHao Kai-Lan* embarking on a new adventure that entertains while teaching; or it could be our critically-acclaimed Nick News with Linda Ellerbee, which gives children across the country a chance to learn about and discuss important national issues (such as when kids were able to ask questions of both Presidential candidates during last year's Kids Pick the President program).

For those of you who may not know, *Dora the Explorer* (which first aired in 2000) is a play-along, animated adventure series starring Dora, a seven-year-old Latina heroine whose adventures take place in an imaginative, tropical world filled with jungles, beaches and rainforests. Dora explores her world just as pre-schoolers do everyday, and the show is designed to actively engage its audience in an interactive quest using a variety of learning techniques. In every episode, Dora invites the audience to participate in an exciting adventure, where each step of their journey consists of a problem or puzzle that Dora and the audience must solve. Dora is proudly bilingual and uses her knowledge of English and Spanish to communicate with her friends, overcome obstacles and reach her goals. In each episode, Dora teaches a Spanish word or phrase to the viewers and then asks them to use it to solve a problem and forge ahead.

*NiHao, Kai-Lan* (which premiered last year) is also a play-along, think-along series starring Kai-Lan Chow, a playful, adventurous bi-lingual pre-schooler with a big heart. Kai-Lan, who speaks both English and Mandarin, resides in a world infused with Chinese culture – from the dumplings she eats and the lanterns that adorn her

house to the huge Chinese New Year celebration she has with her family and friends. *Ni Hao, Kai-Lan* centers on Kai-Lan and her relationships with her grandfather, YeYe, and her animal friends.

Not only are these shows educational, but they help open the minds and worlds of pre-schoolers. There is a reason that millions of kids, regardless of their ethnic background, can say “thank you” and “you’re welcome” in Spanish – it is because of the lessons they have learned from watching Dora and her friends. These shows are an important bridge to help children develop an appreciation for different cultures.

Just as important as what you and your children see when you turn on an episode of Dora is what takes place behind the scenes. Hundreds of hours of research and testing goes into producing our children’s programs. The when, where, what, how and why behind Dora’s adventures are not accidental -- they are born out of the expertise and input of child development experts and educators. Our expert consultants help us every step of the way, to ensure that our curriculum goals are appropriate for our target audience and that viewers understand the educational concepts. Our educational programming is thoroughly tested, and often screened by dozens of children as part of our research process, so that we can make appropriate adjustments before we show it to a wide audience on Nickelodeon or Noggin. It should be no surprise, then, that high quality educational and informational programming is extremely expensive to produce. A single, 30-minute episode of *Dora The Explorer* costs an average of \$650,000. We also engage nearly every day in voluminous research on families and children to help us understand our audience and the challenges they confront in their day-to-day lives.

Despite this cost, and again – without any governmental requirement – Noggin provides this educational content 24 hours per day, seven days per week (in addition to the Nick Jr. educational programming block on Nickelodeon). In fact, in just one month, Noggin provides more educational programming than all four major broadcast networks combined air in an entire year. It bears noting, though, that we could not possibly provide this high quality programming on Noggin without the advertising we air on Nickelodeon and our other networks. While all of our kids’ channels abide by the commercial time limits imposed by the Children’s Television Act, these advertisements subsidize the programming on Noggin and Nick Jr., making it possible for us to provide these unique services. Ad revenues also serve as an important source of funding for our long-standing commitment to public service.

Our commitment to age appropriate programming extends to our shows for school age children as well. Thirty years ago, these kids had few television options and largely viewed programming intended for adults. At Nickelodeon, we responded by creating a safe viewing space that parents could trust while also being attractive to kids and teens. We promised that we would address issues that affect kids’ lives and celebrate things important to children. As times and kids have changed, we’ve adapted too, but we’ve always stayed true to our promise to kids and parents alike.

On the Nickelodeon channel today, kids watch because our programming is funny and poignant; because we inform and entertain; and because we speak *to* kids about the things going on their own lives. We help children feel good about themselves by showing them stories that let them see how others are going through the same experiences as they grow up. For example, *True Jackson, VP*, a program for teens, portrays the challenges kids face living (and working) in an adult world. True is a self-confident teen who works hard to earn the respect of her older co-

workers. The show certainly presents light-hearted moments, especially in portraying the sometimes immature adults who surround True at work. But it also provides a platform for teens to experience some of the pressures of growing up by watching True meet the challenges she faces with confidence. Like her name, the character remains true to herself no matter how she may be judged by those around her.

For tweens, *iCarly* takes full advantage of the intersection between television and the Internet by integrating video content created by the show's fans. This innovative approach to storytelling has helped *iCarly* connect directly with its core audience as it presents stories reflecting the experiences kids face in school, with their friends and in dealing with their parents.

And all children enjoy the annual *Kids Choice Awards*, which honors the stars who matter most to kids.

Beyond what we produce for cable and satellite television, beginning with *The Big Help* in 1994, Nickelodeon's commitment to the pro-social needs of children has been unparalleled. Through our award winning pro-social initiatives, we constantly try to engage children and help *empower them* to make a difference in their own lives, for their families and communities, and in the world at large. Since our inception, Nickelodeon has challenged its audience to make a difference and give back, and our viewers have answered that call. There are numerous Nickelodeon pro-social initiatives and partnerships that I could talk about; attached is a detailed list. But today I will just spend a few minutes talking about two of them: (1) our comprehensive response to childhood obesity, including our *Let's Just Play* campaign; and (2) our newest and biggest initiative to-date, *The Big Green Help*.



*Let's Just Play* has been Nickelodeon's long-term, multimedia campaign designed to help children make healthy lifestyle choices. When an issue, such as childhood obesity, becomes so prevalent that it impacts the well-being of kids, our approach is to do the necessary due diligence to ensure that our programming, initiatives and messaging will help serve our audience. Long before the media frenzy started about childhood obesity, we felt compelled to confront the issue. We met with stakeholders on all sides and educated ourselves about how best to respond. What we learned helped guide our company in our health and wellness campaigns and craft content to help children lead the way.

As part of *Let's Just Play*, we've encouraged kids to make the changes necessary to lead healthier lives. In 2007, more than 1 million kids signed up to take our *Let's Just Play Healthy Challenge* by following a nine-month healthy living program mirroring two role model kids. We partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to extend the reach of the program to millions more children in diverse communities and clubs nationwide. Our focus is not just to talk to kids about calories in and energy out. We go farther – helping children understand the underlying causes of obesity, such as lack of physical education in schools, families not spending enough quality time together, regional demographic challenges, and insufficient safe play-space in communities, to name a few. By providing children information about these causes and giving them solutions to confront obstacles they encounter, we are connecting the dots between information and action.

The cornerstone of our effort has been to activate community events and programs for kids and families in all 50 states. We're especially proud of our *Worldwide*

*Day of Play*, which is a key element of the *Let's Just Play* campaign. This is an entire day committed to the celebration of active play. We do our part by literally taking Nickelodeon and Noggin off the air and web – going completely dark on the channels and their companion web sites – for three hours. Many parents applaud this commitment, although some do complain that we should not be deciding unilaterally when their kids watch television. But we do this to reinforce a simple message: Turn off the television, get up, get out, and go play! Together with our partners, Nickelodeon also organizes and hosts hundreds of events annually to inspire children to go outside and be active.

Equally significant, we understand that children identify and connect with their favorite Nickelodeon characters. In order to ensure that we're consistent in encouraging healthy lifestyles, we've taken the tremendous step of limiting the use of our beloved characters to food packaging that meets "better for you criteria" established by our marketing partners in accordance with governmental dietary guidelines. Beloved characters like Dora or SpongeBob SquarePants can be seen on packaging for fruits and vegetable, including carrots, spinach, clementines, tangelos and oranges. We've taken these steps because they're the right thing to do, and because we know that being good to kids is good for business in the long run.

Last year, Nickelodeon launched its newest and biggest pro-social effort to date, called *The Big Green Help*. This global kid-led initiative provides information and tools to help explain environmental issues to kids and connect them to earth-friendly activities. The mission of *The Big Green Help* is simple: educate and empower kids to make earth-friendly and energy-saving activities a part of their daily lives. To give you an idea of what we're doing to educate and empower kids,

I've provided each Committee member with one of *The Big Green Help* booklets we're disseminating to kids across the country.

The decision to focus on the environment was no accident – like many of our important decisions at Nickelodeon – it came directly from listening to our audience and responding to what is important in their lives. And here's what we heard loud and clear:

- Kids are concerned about the environment but do not know how to make changes in their daily lives; and
- Kids believe they have the power to affect real change on the climate crisis.

*The Big Green Help* provides kids a bridge between the environmental issues facing our society and how they can be part of the solution. Many of us are reminded each day by our children when we drive them to school that we need to wear a seat belt. Because of *The Big Green Help*, millions of parents will now be reminded, again and again, to recycle, to turn off the water when they brush their teeth, and to buy a car with better fuel economy.

In just one year, *The Big Green Help* has partnered with a dozen organizations, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Wildlife Federation, the NFL and the U.S. Forest Service, among others, and millions of kids have pledged to take action. The first-ever global green digital gaming event resulted in more than 27 million game sessions in 2008. And in the first six months of 2009, *The Big Green Help* has:

- mobilized Green Teams with an all new toolkit for schools, clubs and organizations that includes curriculum and activities to help kids fulfill their Big Green Help pledges;
- celebrated kids, schools and organizations' efforts on Earth Day (4/22) by highlighting kids and events on-air and online. Over 4,500 schools and organizations hosted Big Green Help Earth Day events and kids united to Power Down across the country;
- announced a Big Green Help grants program to offer seed money to schools and organizations to build out green projects in local communities; and
- produced green-themed episodes of all of Nickelodeon's biggest hits including *iCarly*, *True Jackson, Diego*, and *Dora the Explorer*.

Just to take a quick look into the future, we are also very excited about the new *Get Schooled* partnership between Viacom (our parent company) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to focus on the education crisis in America. The campaign will combine Viacom's media properties (including our Nickelodeon channels and web sites) with the key policy priorities of the Gates Foundation: increasing high school and college graduation rates, improving post-secondary readiness, and promoting the fundamental importance of education. The partnership will launch on September 8, 2009 with a 30-minute program airing across all Viacom networks. One of the cornerstones will be [GetSchooled.com](http://GetSchooled.com), which is designed to engage and motivate young people, parents and teachers as well as activate the public at large.

With so much support and momentum, we're excited about what's in store.

Speaking of the future, I wanted to close out my testimony by taking some time to share some of what we've learned about kids and families over the years and what we see on the horizon.

Although we have witnessed profound changes to our society over the past three decades, some things fortunately have not changed:

- for 3-17 year olds, family is everything;
- kids remain the focal point of their family's lives;
- kids and teens love their parents;
- families value their time together and will sacrifice personal pleasure to connect;
- as much as they like TV, kids, tweens and teens would rather engage in a social or physical activity;

and

- the three words that people most frequently use to define their families are "loving", "fun", and "busy."

Where we have seen change is in the role that technology plays in the lives of kids and their families. For pre-schoolers, the Internet is largely an extension of the television shows and characters they love; parents view learning to use the computer as a skill unto itself. As kids grow older, the Internet becomes an outlet to explore personal interests, help with homework and have fun; by the time they reach their teenage years it has become an important tool for communication and self-expression through social media.

Nickelodeon provides families with a full range of web sites with content targeting kids at all stages of their development. From NickJr.com, the leading web site for parents of young kids and the #1 web site for pre-schoolers, to The-N.com, a dynamic platform for teens with groundbreaking interactivity, there is something for everyone. We even have ParentsConnect.com, featuring the tagline “We’re not perfect, we’re parents,” which strives to celebrate the reality of parenthood and make parents’ lives easier. According to Nielsen, 16 million kids aged 2-11 were online in May of this year – they made up 10% of all Internet users in the country. That same month, nearly 7 million unique users visited Nick.com’s broadband video player, viewing an astonishing *125 million* video streams. Nickelodeon also has begun to make its content available via mobile devices; families can get both traditional programming as well as short form episodes of their favorite shows through Verizon and AT&T phones.

Clearly, parents and children alike are telling us through their daily actions that they do not use media the same way families did a generation ago. The Internet has empowered parents and kids to decide what media is consumed. We respect that, and we support helping kids and their parents navigate the entertainment and educational opportunities available through technology. At the same time, we take

online safety very seriously. We work closely with partners such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to incorporate age-relevant safety tools into all of our web sites to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that our sites protect our users, while providing them with the benefits of socializing online.

Specifically, for social networking features, we employ a combination of human monitors and technical solutions (such as word filtering), taking a multifaceted approach to ensuring a good experience for our users. In all of our Nickelodeon-branded sites, our monitors review user communications prior to publication; and, within our adult-directed sites, in addition to our filtering systems, monitors review communications flagged as inappropriate by other users. Our filtering systems are updated regularly. For synchronous “chatting” between users, we limit communication to a list of pre-approved, kid-appropriate words. With respect to asynchronous chatting, such as on message boards, we employ a mix of human monitors and a filter technology that flags inappropriate messages. For example, we have incorporated into our filter terms related to pedophiles from a phrase list developed by the NCMEC. In addition, when children register to our kids sites, they are asked to create a generic user name (e.g., a “Nick Name” on Nick.com) rather than use their real name – in fact, we discourage kids from using their real names, and if they sign up for synchronous chatting, we send confirmation emails to parents when their children register. And we provide links to safety guides at the bottom of all of our children’s web sites, so that parents have resource to turn to when they want additional information about protecting their kids online.

As much as technology – cell phones, videogames and the Internet – has impacted the ways kids and families consume information and interact, television remains an

important part of their lives. And one of the statistics that stands out for us is that, despite all of the distractions, co-viewing on kids' cable networks does help bring families together. Families today treasure the time they spend together, want more of it, and even as they are pulled in many directions, co-viewing television – the heart of family entertainment – remains something that parents and children can enjoy with one another in their free time. Particularly exciting for us, is that Nickelodeon and Noggin are the networks that families are most likely to watch together. In 2009, these two networks have the highest percentage of adults 18-49 who are watching with kids 2-11, among all kids' networks. In fact, co-viewing levels for kids' cable networks are much higher than co-viewing for broadcast channels. We are proud to make programming that brings families closer.

In conclusion, I want to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to come and tell you the Nickelodeon story. In the past 30 years, we've witnessed a generation of kids who grew up watching Nickelodeon become parents themselves.

And of all the statistics I've cited today, and in the mountains of research we've piled up over the past three decades, perhaps the most important and gratifying thing for us is that those parents who grew up watching Nickelodeon have the greatest trust in our networks and can now share the same experiences with their own children. That trust and our honest dialogue with children mean that we often know first what will be next for kids.

We earned that trust and look forward to continuing to earn it, build it, and maintain it by providing them and millions of other families with compelling educational and entertainment programming.



It bears repeating that Nickelodeon has grown from a single channel to four networks plus distribution on the Internet, mobile phones, video on-demand and elsewhere all without any government mandate. No rule or regulation ever compelled us to invest in this incredible array of children's programming. In fact, the light regulatory touch that the government has relied on for cable and satellite channels has produced the incredible competition and options that we see today. As technology has changed, along with children's viewing habits, the Federal Communications Commission has responded by updating its commercial time limitation rules to ensure that the essential protections of the Children's Television Act are honored. Beyond that, however, we urge the Committee to recognize how competitive the children's programming market is today, and to continue to let us develop new and innovative ways to educate and entertain children without additional regulation.

## SUMMARY OF NICKELODEON PRO-SOCIAL INITIATIVES

**The Big Green Help** – *The Big Green Help* is a multiplatform campaign that provides information and tools to help explain environmental issues to kids, and taps into Nickelodeon’s history of addressing important topics. *The Big Green Help* was developed from research which shows that kids believe that they can lead the way in addressing positive change for the environment. Launched Earth Day 2008, *The Big Green Help* connects families to ways they can help the environment at home, in-school and in their communities.

The centerpiece of *The Big Green Help*’s 2008 campaign is the first-of-its-kind global multiplayer online green game for kids—”The Big Green Help Global Challenge.” Additionally, several customized online mini-games incorporate *The Big Green Help* partner organizations – Boys & Girls Clubs of America; Girl Scouts USA; The LeBron James Family Foundation; National Wildlife Federation; Natural Resources Defense Council; National 4-H Council; and NFL. These partners help extend the campaign’s reach through local grassroots activities and programs where kids can fulfill virtually volunteered hours.

For more information, visit [www.nick.com/biggreenhelp](http://www.nick.com/biggreenhelp).

**Kids Pick the President** – Nickelodeon’s year-long *Kids Pick the President* campaign was conceived to educate and empower kids across the country to have a voice in the U.S. presidential election. Kids have correctly predicted the next president in five out of the last six national elections. In 2008, more than two million kids voted in Nickelodeon’s “Kids’ Vote”— the most ever in the history of the campaign. The 2008 *Kids Pick the President* campaign included the first-ever kids’ primary; four *Nick News with Linda Ellerbee Kids Pick the President* television specials; the ‘Kids’ Vote’ in October; a special online election website; and for the first time, coverage of the President’s Inauguration.

For more information, visit [www.nick.com/kpp](http://www.nick.com/kpp).

**Kick One, Pick One** – Continuing Nickelodeon’s legacy of empowering its audience with information and tools to help better their lifestyles and communities, on Jan. 1, 2008, it launched “Kick One, Pick One”. This pro-social initiative aims to encourage families to eat smarter, get fit and spend more time together. The Nick-at-Nite initiative runs on multiple platforms through: a series of public service announcements focusing on proper nutrition; getting families physically active and encouraging them to simply take time for family conversation; a website packed with information about the campaign, helpful tips and a family contract to measure their commitment; and an on-air, online and radio promotional campaign.

**Let’s Just Play** – For several years, the Let’s Just Play program has empowered kids with resources, tools and the information they need to live healthier lifestyles. Nickelodeon has committed millions of dollars and air time to health and wellness messaging, and has awarded approximately \$3 million in grants and through its “Let’s Just Play Giveaway” to schools and after-school programs to help provide resources that will create and expand opportunities for physical play.

In November 2005, “Let’s Just Play” entered into a partnership with The Alliance for a Healthier Generation – an initiative between the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association – to combat the spread of childhood obesity. The three organizations combined forces on a comprehensive media and public awareness campaign, encouraging young people to engage in healthy and active lifestyles. Nickelodeon used the “Let’s Just Play” campaign and its multimedia platforms, and worked with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and other partners, to reach millions of young people across the country and spread the message of the Healthier Generation movement.

For more information, visit [www.nick.com/letsjustplay](http://www.nick.com/letsjustplay).

**Worldwide Day of Play** – Nickelodeon’s Worldwide Day of Play, part of the Let’s Just Play program, is an entire day committed to the celebration of active play. During the Worldwide Day of Play, which

takes place on a Saturday, when we typically have our highest audience, we take Nickelodeon and Noggin off the air and web – going completely dark on the channels and their companion web sites – for three hours to reinforce one simple message: turn the television off, get up, get out and go play!

Along with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the NFL, and thousands of local schools and community-based organizations, Nickelodeon hosts hundreds of events annually that take place within communities throughout the world. Nickelodeon's Worldwide Days of Play have inspired millions of kids to go outside and be active.

**Get Ready to Read** – Noggin is delivering on its mission to be “like preschool on TV” by committing to doing something about reading. We have made early childhood literacy a curricular priority. In partnership with First Book, we use our TV network, website and outreach to put books in the hands of kids who need them.

The network is a passionate advocate of words – all kinds of words – and uses every possible opportunity to build its audiences' vocabulary and their own love of language. Noggin does this through song, its interstitials and a wealth of online games. The channel even goes so far as to opportunistically include phonics, rhyme and other early literacy-based content into its on-air menus and promotions.

Noggin develops and airs series, like *Pinky Dinky Doo*, that enhance preschoolers' listening and comprehension skills as well as their understanding of narrative elements like sequence, cause and effect, setting, and character

The *Get Ready To Read* campaign aims to build early literacy skills and awareness with the goal of generating 1 million new books for at-risk preschoolers.

**The N** – The N's pro-social strategy has been to partner with relevant organizations that tie thematically to its programs or individual episodes. Specifically:

- *Degrassi/PAX*

The N partnered with PAX Real Solutions to Gun Violence (PAX reports that in 80% of school shootings, the attacker told someone before he/she committed the crime). The N created a public service announcement with Aubrey Graham (Jimmy from *Degrassi*) for PAX's 1-866-SpeakUp, an anonymous phone line where viewers can report weapons threats at school. The PSA premiered during the episode of *Degrassi* where a school shooting took place. The PSA won a Beacon Award.

- *South of Nowhere/GLAAD*

The N's *South of Nowhere* is the first prime time series to partner with GLAAD on its Be An Ally and Friend campaign. The cast filmed a PSA, directing viewers to the GLAAD.org site, where they could learn how to support their friends and loved ones in their coming out process. The PSA premiered on-air during the Season Two premiere of *South of Nowhere*.

- *Give Some, Get Some Auctions*

The N auctioned off items from its shows and gave the proceeds to 4 different charities during the 2006 Holiday season. For 4 weeks, viewers were directed from the air to the-n.com to bid on real items from The N original series. Each week a different show was featured. Week one (*Instant Star*) supported the Starlight Foundation, week two (*Degrassi*) the Food Bank for New York, week three (*South of Nowhere*) went to My Friend's Place and Week Four (*Beyond the Break*) went to Oceana.



## **The Big Help Legacy**

Nickelodeon has a strong pro-social legacy. The company believes its responsibility to kids extends beyond offering them quality entertainment on-air and online, but to also provide them with tools and information to empower them to take action.

### **A History of Service and Volunteerism**

In 1994, Nickelodeon launched The Big Help, a public service campaign that connected kids to service and volunteering. The Big Help was in response to the company's belief that if kids were connected to constructive activities early on in life, they would be less likely to engage in destructive activities later on. For many years, the Big Help brought millions of kids into the national and local volunteer infrastructure and raised the profile of the impact that kids can make with service opportunities.

The Big Help campaign broke the mold of a traditional linear television campaign and extended its reach to build a grassroots infrastructure that partnered with more than 28 national service partners. Every year, Nickelodeon held the Big-Help-A-Thon, a live 8 eight-hour on-air block where kids were encouraged to call-in and pledge volunteer hours in their communities. Over the course of the campaign, more than 33 million kids to called-in and pledged 383 million volunteer hours.

### **The Big Help's Lasting Impact**

The Big Help achieved almost total awareness among the kid demographic, changed kids' perception about their responsibility to their communities and educated and encouraged tens of millions of kids to get involved. Even after the initial launch of The Big Help, partnerships with organizations such as the American Red Cross extended past the campaign as kids continued to rally around major crises including the 2004 Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. Today, the company's current commitment to the environment, *The Big Green Help*, is in line with the powerful pro-social legacy of volunteerism established in the 1990s with the Big Help.

### **Big Help Partners**

American Camping Association, American Humane Association, America's Promise, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Feeding America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Cable in the Classroom, Feed the Children, Girl Scouts of the USA, Girls Incorporated, Habitat for Humanity, The Jane Goodall Institute, Keep America Beautiful, March of Dimes, National 4-H Council, National Association of Elementary School Principals, The National PTA, National Recreation and Park Association, National Wildlife Federation, Points of Light Foundation, Second Harvest, United States Department of Education Office of the Secretary, YMCA of the USA, Youth Service America, YWCA of the USA



## The Big Green Help

### **Nickelodeon Empowers Kids to Take the Lead on Environmental Action**

*The Big Green Help* is a global kid-led initiative that provides information and tools to help explain climate change to kids and connects them to earth-friendly activities in their everyday lives.

**Mission:** Educate and empower kids to make earth-friendly and energy-saving activities a part of their daily lives.

### **Research Based**

Nickelodeon partnered with the **Pew Center on Global Climate Change** to understand kids and parents' attitudes and behaviors towards the environment.

- Kids are concerned about the environment but do not know how to make changes in their daily lives
- Kids believe they have the power to affect real change on the climate crisis. Nickelodeon listened to kids and crafted *The Big Green Help* to connect the dots between what climate change is and how kids can be part of the solution.

### **Who Is Involved**

Leaders in the field of youth and the environment have partnered with Nickelodeon to bring *The Big Green Help* to life with programs, activities and events in schools and clubs across the country.

- National Wildlife Federation
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Girl Scouts USA
- The Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- The National 4-H
- LeBron James Family Foundation
- National Football League
- National Environmental Education Foundation
- National Education Association
- The US Forest Service
- EARTHNEXT

## **First Year Accomplishments**

Millions of kids around the world have joined *The Big Green Help* and committed themselves to take action on the environment. In its first year, the campaign included:

- 5 green themes to drive educational messaging: Slow the Flow, Curb the Car, Recycle/Recycle, Grow the Green and SpongeBob & You Save the Big Blue
- **The Big Green Help Global Challenge** was the first-ever green global digital gaming event. Kids had the opportunity to Play, Pledge and Act as they played the games, pledged real world hours and fulfill their pledges in communities across the country. There were over 27 million game sessions in 2008
- Almost **2 million kids pledged** to take action for the environment
- Nickelodeon stars Miranda Cosgrove, KeKe Palmer, Lily Collin and J.J., as well as celebrities like LeBron James and Cameron Diaz
- Walmart partnership at launch to give out over 1.3 million seed cards on Earth Day 2008
- Cameron Diaz presented the first ever Big Green Help Award to Leonardo DiCaprio at the 2009 Kids' Choice Awards watched by 8 million kids nationwide

## **2009 Snapshot:**

The Big Green Help kicked off its second year on Earth Day 2009 with a big idea -- kids everywhere united in a moment of solidarity by turning off lights. **Power Down** was part of a drive for kids to form **Green Teams** in communities worldwide where they work together to make earth-friendly choices and participate in activities.

The network did the following:

- Mobilized Green Teams with an all new toolkit for schools, clubs and organizations with curriculum and activities to help kids fulfill their Big Green Help pledges
- Celebrated kids, schools and organizations' efforts on Earth Day (4/22) by highlighting kids and events on-air and online. Over **4,500** schools and organizations hosted Big Green Help Earth Day events and kids will united to **Power Down** across the country
- Announced a Big Green Help Grants program to offer seed money to schools and organizations to build out green projects in local communities
- Produced green-themed episodes of all of Nickelodeon's biggest hits including iCarly, True Jackson, Diego, and Dora the Explorer
- Incorporated Big Green Help messaging into SpongeBob 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations

## **Looking Ahead:**

Nickelodeon will continue to support kids to form Green Teams in communities nationwide and will encourage schools and organizations to apply for Green Grants.



## **Health and Wellness**

For over 6 years, Nickelodeon has championed health and wellness as its premier pro-social initiative. This effort represents a commitment of more than \$30 million in resources of the company and a filter through which the company reviews all of its business initiatives across all platforms-- television, online, digital, consumer products and recreation. The issue of childhood obesity is crucial to the Nickelodeon audience, and it is the company's corporate responsibility to be part of the solution for kids and families to navigate the issue. That is why Nickelodeon has sponsored focus groups, met with governmental and regulatory agencies and commissioned a comprehensive study, *Kids, Food and Eating Behaviors*, in partnership with Yale University.

### **Let's Just Play**

In 2002, in response to reports that kids were leading sedentary lifestyles, experiencing over-scheduling and cutbacks on PE and recess and the depletion of community resources, Nickelodeon launched the Let's Just Play campaign. Let's Just Play featured city-wide play days in communities across the country as well as a grassroots component with founding partners, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The goal of the campaign is to get kids to participate in free-form play and other fitness activities.

Nickelodeon continues this tradition with its annual *Worldwide Day of Play*, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year. Nickelodeon goes dark for three hours and turns off all programming as a further way to amplify the importance of kids being healthy and active. In partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National PTA and the National Football League, Nickelodeon co-hosts thousands of grassroots *Worldwide Day of Play* events across the globe.

### **Let's Just Play Go Healthy Challenge**

In a signature partnership with the W.J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association, Nickelodeon launched the Let's Just Play Go Healthy Challenge as the kids' pillar of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The Go Healthy Challenge is a television series and website that encourages kids to make the changes necessary to lead healthier lives by mirroring four role model kids featured in the series. These kids modeled healthy behavior and by helping kids at home understand the causes of obesity such as lack of physical education, families not spending quality time together, regional demographic challenges and insufficient safe play spaces. To bring the Go Healthy Challenge experience into the audience's homes, the on-air campaign was complemented by online resources such as a downloadable tracker to log personal progress, as well as a curriculum based on monthly themes to follow. More than 1 million kids have pledged to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle as part of the Let's Just Play Go Healthy Challenge.

To supplement the Go Healthy Challenge, *Nick News with Linda Ellerbee* produced special edition shows featuring reports on obesity, good nutrition and health which included a variety of perspectives from kids, experts, famous chefs and even President Clinton.

### **Let's Just Play Advisory Committee**

Nickelodeon formed the Let's Just Play Advisory Committee, a team of experts on child nutrition, exercise, psychology and civic engagement, that worked to provide ongoing expertise in the development and implementation of the campaign.

### **Let's Just Play Grant Program**

As a response to the hurdles and lack of resources that organizations continue to face to get kids active, Nickelodeon has given \$3 million in local seed funding for health, nutrition, physical education and other fitness programs through the *Let's Just Play Giveaway*, a kid-driven grants program. Kids partnered with their school or community-based organization to apply for grants. Winners were announced on-air and online, thereby raising awareness about the issue of resources among kids.





## **Worldwide Day of Play Saturday September 26, 2009**

In 2004, Nickelodeon pioneered an unprecedented commitment to health & wellness. In a bold move, Nickelodeon turned off all television programming for 3 hours to deliver a simple and clear message to kids—Turn the television off, get up, get out, and go play! To make *Worldwide Day of Play* real for kids, Nickelodeon partnered with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and local schools and community organizations nationwide to host over 650 local *Worldwide Day of Play* events in each of the 50 states and 4 countries internationally. Taking it one step further, Nick has awarded over \$2.5 million in grants to over 450 schools and community organizations to expand physical education and recreation programs.

### **Growing the Movement**

In partnership with the W.J. Clinton Foundation, the American Heart Association, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the NFL, Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC, and local schools and community-based organizations, Nickelodeon continues to grow WWDOP. In 2006, over 850 events were held worldwide. That number doubled in 2007, with over 1,700 events taking place in 15 countries. Over 250,000 kids participated in over 1,800 events in each of the 50 states, 10 NFL teams hosted WWDOP events with their players, and NFLRush.com went dark from 12-3 pm. This year, we seek to surpass those numbers with more events in more cities and more countries. **September 26, 2009** marks Nickelodeon's 6<sup>th</sup> annual *Worldwide Day of Play*.

### **Highlights**

- From 12-3 pm EST, Nickelodeon, The N, Noggin, & Nicktoons Network turns off all programming on television and goes dark for 3 hours.
- Throughout the rest of the day, schools and organizations hosting local events are scrolled on Nickelodeon.
- Nickelodeon Kids & Family sister sites participate as well. Nick.com, The-N.com, Nicktoonsnetwork.com, Noggin.com, NickJr.com, Neopets, Shockwave, Quizilla, AddictingGames and Parentsconnect roadblocked access from 12-3 pm.
- Health and wellness messaging was featured throughout the day on Nick, including new interstitials and special programming.



## Nick News

*Nick News*, produced by Lucky Duck Productions, is now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, and is the longest-running kids' news show in television history. It has built its reputation on the respectful and direct way it speaks to kids about the important issues of the day. Over the years, *Nick News* has received more than 20 Emmy nominations and numerous Emmy wins, including last year, when "The Untouchable Kids of India" won the 2008 Prime Time Emmy for Outstanding Children's Program. In 2007, "Private Worlds: Kids and Autism" won the Emmy for Outstanding Children's Programming. In 1994, the entire series, *Nick News*, won the Emmy for Outstanding Children's Programming. In 1998, "What Are You Staring At?" a program about kids with physical disabilities, won the Emmy for Outstanding Children's Programming. In 2002, "Faces of Hope: The Kids of Afghanistan," won the Emmy for Outstanding Children's Programming. In 2004, two *Nick News* Specials, "The Courage to Live: Kids, South Africa and AIDS" and "There's No Place Like Home," a special about homeless kids in America, were both nominated for the Outstanding Children's Programming Emmy. In 2005, it won the Emmy for Outstanding Children's Programming for its show, "From the Holocaust to the Sudan." *Nick News*, produced by Lucky Duck Productions, is also the recipient of three Peabody Awards, including a personal award given to Ellerbee for her coverage for kids of the President Clinton investigation. The series has also received two Columbia duPont Awards and more than a dozen Parents' Choice Awards.

