



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE *DRAGON TALES* SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The PBS Ready to Learn program, *Dragon Tales* is designed to help children 2 to 6 years old (with a primary emphasis on 4 year olds) develop strategies for meeting challenges in their lives: social challenges such as developing and maintaining relationships, emotional challenges such as coping with fears, physical challenges such as learning to ride a bicycle and cognitive challenges such as following clues and solving problems. A recent evaluation of the series, consisting of three studies (two school-viewing studies and one home-viewing study), found that *Dragon Tales* is having a positive impact on the growth and development of its target audience.

Key findings from the school-viewing studies include the following:

- After children viewed 20 episodes of *Dragon Tales*, assessments by parents, teachers, and researchers showed that *Dragon Tales* viewers significantly increased the frequency with which they chose to do challenging tasks, started or organized play with others, shared with their peers, and cooperated with others in comparison to a control group that watched a different educational program.
- Observations made during free play indicated that *Dragon Tales* viewers were more goal-oriented. They spent substantially more time making things than children who watched the control program.

Key findings from the home-viewing study include the following:

- Viewing diaries filled out by families at home revealed that children in this study watched *Dragon Tales* more frequently than any other program. The series was also cited as being children's favorite program more often than other children's programs.
- *Dragon Tales* had an important impact on parent-child interactions. It stimulated significantly more parent-child talk about "trying" things than did the favorite shows of non-*Dragon Tales* viewers, as well as more discussion (at a marginal level of significance) about emotions, feelings, sharing, and the use of Spanish. Moreover, parents who watched *Dragon Tales* with their children were more likely to say that it put their child in a good mood than parents who co-viewed other programs with their children.

The cumulative data from this evaluation indicate that *Dragon Tales* is achieving its educational objectives. These findings are consistent with the framework that has been established by the National Institute of Early Childhood Development and Education within the U.S. Department of Education which emphasizes the 3 R's of Early Childhood Education: Resilience, Relationships, and Readiness.