

## What is Kijkwijzer?

With Kijkwijzer, the Netherlands has a uniform classification and information system for cinema films, DVDs and television programmes. Kijkwijzer aims to inform parents and children about the potentially harmful aspects of audio-visual productions. The system provides age categories (AL, 6, 9, 12 and 16 years) and indicates the principal reasons for these: violence, fear, sex, drug abuse, discrimination and coarse language. Kijkwijzer does not make any recommendations in terms of suitability, quality or good taste.

## Who contributes to Kijkwijzer?

Kijkwijzer has been around since 2001 and was developed by NICAM – the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audio-visual Media. NICAM was set up by the public and commercial broadcasters, the sector organisations for cinema, film and DVD distribution and retailers. Kijkwijzer was set up at the request of and with assistance from the Dutch government.

The high quality and effectiveness of Kijkwijzer has been recognised internationally. This is thanks to the unique cooperation between the audio-visual industry and the Dutch government. All commercial and public broadcasters, as well as the vast majority of film and DVD distributors, use Kijkwijzer. In this way, audio-visual media providers in the Netherlands take social responsibility in relation to the protection of children.

## Recognition and appreciation

The vast majority of the general public in the Netherlands are familiar with Kijkwijzer. Parents of school-age children have great confidence in the Kijkwijzer recommendations. Almost all parents support the system and approximately 90% actually use Kijkwijzer when choosing television programmes, cinema films and DVDs. This has been demonstrated by research carried out by Intomart GfK.

Children also regularly use Kijkwijzer. A survey carried out by the Jeugdjournaal [Children's News] among children aged 9 to 14 years revealed that many children use Kijkwijzer to make selective use of media. Kijkwijzer is therefore an extremely useful tool for both parents and children.

## How are the classifications made?

The affiliated broadcasters and distributors classify their productions themselves using the criteria drawn up by Kijkwijzer. The broadcasters' and distributors' own personnel are trained by NICAM to classify audio-visual productions on the basis of an extensive questionnaire, developed by a team of experts in the field of children and the media. Kijkwijzer is a dynamic system. Social developments, new academic insights and changes in the media landscape and content supply can lead to innovations in the Kijkwijzer system.

## Quality important to parents

The quality of the classifications is monitored by NICAM on the basis of random samples. NICAM reports its findings annually to the Dutch Media Authority. By submitting complaints, the general public also contributes to monitoring the quality of the classifications. NICAM can then forward these complaints to an independent complaints committee. The complaints committee has the authority to correct the classification and to impose a penalty.

## Finance

For the time being, half of NICAM's costs are paid for by the government and half by the audio-visual sectors. The media contribution is shared equally between the four sectors: public and commercial broadcasters, DVD distributors and film distributors/cinema operators.



## Transparent

It is important that the Kijkwijzer system is transparent. Everyone – both consumers and the affiliated party – must be able to determine how a particular classification has been arrived at and obtain insight into the mechanisms underlying the coding process. All the information on Kijkwijzer, as well as the current classifications, can be found at [www.kijkwijzer.nl](http://www.kijkwijzer.nl). This information is also available on the site in English.

## Kijkwijzer and the law

Kijkwijzer warns about potentially harmful images. The government has associated statutory stipulations with each of the age classifications. These are laid down in Article 240a of the Dutch Criminal Code. This stipulates that films and DVDs may not be shown, sold, rented or lent out to children who are too young for these. The legislator applies the Kijkwijzer age classifications in the enforcement of this legislation.



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