

QUICK FACTS

- Children ages 0-6 watch an average of 2 hours of TV per day.
- Children age 7-18 watch almost 5 hours (4:41) of TV per day.
- 1 in 5 parents worry about the amount of time their children watch TV.
- Children living in unsafe neighborhoods have a higher rate of obesity, spend less time playing outdoors, and spend more time watching TV.
- In 2004 the average number per household was 3.5 TV's which increased from 2.4 in 2001.
- Children without TV rules watch almost 40 minutes more daily.
- 51% of families leave the TV on when no one is watching.
- 63% of families watch TV during meals.
- Kids with a TV in their bedroom watch 1.5 hours more per day.

V-CHIP

All TV's 13 inches or larger made after January 1, 2000, must have V-Chip technology. This is a useful tool to block the programs that children should not be watching. See the this website for more information <http://www.fcc.gov/vchip/>. There are other products that can also block programs such as the Weemote, TVGuardian, Channel Blocker, and ReplayTV. See this website for more information about these products <http://www.familysafemedia.com/v-chip.html>.

RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://www.aap.org>

Center for Screen-Time Awareness
<http://www.tvturnoff.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov>

Coalition for Quality Children's Media
<http://www.cqcm.org>

Family Safe Media
<http://www.familysafemedia.com>

Federal Communications Commission
<http://www.fcc.gov>

Kaiser Family Foundation
<http://www.kff.org>

National Institute for Health
<http://www.wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>

National Science Foundation
<http://www.nsf.gov>

Public Broadcasting Service
<http://www.pbs.org>

EFFECTS OF TELEVISION VIEWING ON CHILDREN'S DAILY ACTIVITIES

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PARENTS

- Children copy what you watch on TV, how much TV you watch, when you watch TV, and if you snack while watching TV.
- Younger children may be aggressive because they cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is not.
- Children are less aggressive if parents supervise and know what the TV show is about.
- When your child watches violent TV tell them how you disapprove of the characters actions. Ask them questions to see how they feel about the violence.

HEALTH

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2000) reports that 10% of 2-5 year olds and 15% of 6-11 year olds are overweight.
- A way to decrease the rate of childhood obesity is to decrease the amount of time spent watching TV.
- Physical activity can be increased when children exercise along with or copy the actions of a TV program.
- Your child can be healthier if you decrease the amount of TV your child watches, have a TV turnoff time, teach your child how to pick good TV shows, have better eating habits, increase physical activity, and decrease inactive behaviors.

EDUCATION

- Children do better in school if they watch TV shows on their age level that educate and give information about school topics.
- Heavy TV households (when the TV is usually on) have children who watch more TV and read less. Children who watch less TV have higher reading abilities.
- When the TV is left on with no one watching, the noise is distracting to activities that require thought and concentration for example: reading, homework, conversations, and play.
- Having a TV in the bedroom is associated with poorer test scores.
- Using captions helps young children learn to read by showing them written words, along with the spoken words of the TV characters. Captions also help children pay attention to the meaning of the story instead of unimportant details.
- Routine and attentive viewing of shows that focus on narrative structure (i.e. *Arthur*) can assist bilingual children in developing English narrative styles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Children under the age of 2 should not watch TV and children over the age of 2 should only watch 2 hours of TV per day.
- Avoid having a television set in the child's bedroom.
- Turn television off during meals.
- Find other activities for children such as reading, hobbies, athletics, playing outdoors as a family and creative play (playing make believe).
- Set time limits for viewing.
- Watch television with the child and talk about what happened in the show.
- Make sure children only watch shows made for their age level that will help them learn.
- Set a good example with your own viewing—children watch and copy what you do.
- Make clear and constant rules about how long and what the child watches on TV.
- Record educational and informational shows so the child can watch and learn over and over.
- Do not use TV to punish or reward children.