

THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION ON CHILDREN

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- TV is an important influence on child development and behavior
- The entertainment and advertising industry spends billions of dollars figuring out how to manipulate children to watch hours and hours of television and buy things, this manipulation disempowers parents

Basic Facts:

1. American children view over 23 hours of TV per week
2. Teenagers view an average of 21 to 22 hours per week
3. By the time today's children reach age 70, they will have spent 7 to 10 years of their lives watching television
4. 98% of American households have at least 1 TV
5. 66% of families watch TV while eating dinner
6. 96% have at least 2 TV's
7. 54% have 3 TV's
8. American children view an estimate of 360,000 advertisements on television before graduating high school
9. Children will see nearly 2,000 beer and wine commercials per year
10. By age 18 young people will view an estimated 2000,000 acts of violence alone on TV
11. Teenagers will view nearly 14,000 sexual references, innuendoes and jokes per year
12. On the average, American children are exposed to 5 violent acts per hour on prime time TV

The Effects of Viewing Excessively:

1. TV affects social and emotional behavior
 - Studies on TV viewing reveal that the amount of violence on television is increasing
 - Viewing violent programs can make children afraid, worried or suspicious and may increase tendencies towards aggressive behavior
 - Keep in mind that TV often portrays sexual behavior and the use of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs in inviting terms

2. TV affects creativity and language skills
 - Children who spend a great deal of time watching television have less time for playing reading, doing homework and talking with other children or adults
 - Language skills are best fostered through reading and active 2-way participation in conversations and play activities and excessive TV watching can interfere with growth in these areas
 3. TV affects school achievement
 - Research has shown that the amount of time a child spends on homework is significantly related to how well he or she does in school
 - Since television viewing can interfere with the completion of homework assignments and reduce the amount of sleep a child gets, excessive viewing could affect your child's grades and alertness
 - Excessive TV viewing has also been found to be responsible for shortened attention spans, poor reading skills and childhood obesity
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that doctors are urging parents to cut back on their children's televisions viewing to 1 to 2 hours a day and they are pursuing this issue as vigorously as cessation of smoking

Ten Tips For Parents To Change TV Viewing Habits

1. *Set Clear Limits:*

- Set clear ground rules such as: no TV or video games before school, during daytime hours, during meals or before homework is done
- Limit your child's TV viewing to 1 to 2 hours or less

2. ***Don't Use the TV as a Babysitter:***

- It's very easy to tell your children to "go watch TV" when you are busy or can't think of anything else for them to do
- Using TV as a babysitter may be convenient, but it can begin a pattern of indiscriminate viewing
- If your children are in day-care, make sure they are not watching TV as a substitute for games or other activities

3. ***Don't Make the TV the Focal Point:***

- Avoid placing the TV in the most prominent location in your home, and keep TV sets out of your children and adolescent's rooms
- Families watch less television if the TV is not –literally- at the center of their lives
- A TV in a child's room encourages more use and diminishes your ability to monitor its use

4. ***Offer Other Enjoyable Activities:***

- Once you turn off the TV, be ready with some other fun activities to take its place
- Encourage reading, hobbies, sports and social activities as alternatives to television

5. ***Choose What To Watch:***

- Select the TV programs your children watch as you would choose a movie
- Decide what to watch and turn off the television afterwards to discuss it with your children or adolescents
- Avoid "channel surfing" and never use TV as background noise

6. ***Ban Unacceptable Programs:***

- Forbid children and adolescents from watching TV programs and movies you strongly oppose
- Teach children critical viewing strategies

7. *Identify High Quality Programs:*

- Teach children and adolescents to be critical of overly commercial, simplistic, violent and unrealistic programming
- Watch and discuss some of these programs with your children

8. *Know What Your Kids Are Watching:*

- Watch at least one episode of your children's favorite TV shows
- Discuss both good and bad shows, movies, etc., as this activity gives you the chance to discover and correct a child's faulty impression

9. *Discuss Media Violence:*

- Talk with your children about how TV and movie characters solve their problems
- Ask children to come up with more realistic or nonviolent solutions
- Discuss alternative ways to resolve conflicts

10. *Have a Voice in TV Programming:*

- Call or write your local and national TV Stations to express your approval or disapproval of children's and adult's programming