

Attention Problems Linked to TV Viewing

A new study found that watching television before age 3 increases the chance that a child will have attention problems by age 7. The Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center in Seattle reported on this study in the April 2004 issue of *Pediatrics*.

A child's brain develops very fast during the first few years of life. What a child sees, hears, touches and experiences has an influence on the way his brain develops. When a child plays or sits in a room with people, what he sees and hears does not change very fast. When the child watches a TV or video screen, what he sees changes very, very fast. These fast changing images may **over-stimulate** a child's **brain**. This may affect the child's attention span and ability to concentrate.

A recent survey found that 68% of children under 2 years of age spend **over 2 hours** a day using *screen media*. About 30% of all children have a television in their bedroom.



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

1. **No** screen time for children under 2 years old,
2. **No** more than 1-2 hours a day of *quality* television and video for older children, and
3. **No** electronic media in young children's rooms.

Set viewing rules for your home and sitters. Include the following:

- Limit TV and video time;
- Tell the babysitter and older siblings to *not* let the baby and young children watch TV;
- Give the sitter and siblings activities to do with the younger children; and
- Show your daycare or babysitter this article.

Be aware of how much time your children spend in front of the TV.

Do not use the TV and video games as babysitters. Learn from what doctors are telling us.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.
544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.