

**San Francisco Department of Public Health / San Francisco Unified School District
Decrease TV Watching Campaign Subcommittee**

Children and TV Fact Sheet: What Do We Really Know?
(From American Academy of Pediatrics References)

1. The average American child spends at least 28 hours a week watching television, and additional hours playing videogames and surfing the Internet. Teenagers graduating from high school have spent 15,000 hours watching television and 12,000 hours in the classroom. By age 70, the average person will have spent 10 years watching television.
2. More than 1000 scientific studies carried out since the 1970's have provided documentation that viewing entertainment violence can lead to aggressive attitudes, values and behavior in children. Prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence in real life that is measurable and long-lasting.
3. Children who see a lot of violence are more likely to view violence as an effective way of settling conflicts, assume that acts of violence are acceptable behavior, and increases fear of becoming a victim of violence.
4. Many teenagers, developmentally unable to make mature and properly informed choices, may imitate alcohol consumption and sexually related behaviors they view on television. They are typically not shown the consequences of these behaviors, such as motor vehicle trauma, unintended pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
5. Very early exposure to television during the critical period of brain growth, especially synaptic development during the first 2-3 years of life, are associated with disorders of attention by age 7. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children less than two years of age not watch television and that television sets not be placed in children's bedrooms are designed, in part, to limit the risk of development of learning disabilities and ADHD.
6. Children who watch more than 4 hours of television per day are at significantly greater risk of obesity than children watching fewer than 2 hours per day because TV watching increases sedentary behaviors as opposed to engaging in physical exercise, encourages prolonged exposure to marketing of fast foods, and is associated with eating calorie dense foods while watching television. Numerous scientific studies now provide strong evidence that limiting television viewing by children is an important component in any childhood obesity prevention program.
7. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends use of alternative entertainment that promotes interaction with children, such as reading together, singing, athletics, hobbies and creative play.

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