

# Media and Children, AAP

Media is everywhere. TV, Internet, computer and video games all vie for our children's attention. Information on this page can help parents understand the impact media has in our children's lives, while offering tips on managing time spent with various media. The AAP has recommendations for parents and pediatricians.

Today's children are spending an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media, including televisions, computers, phones and other electronic devices. To help kids make wise media choices, parents should monitor their media diet. Parents can make use of established ratings systems for shows, movies and games to avoid inappropriate content, such as violence, explicit sexual content or glorified tobacco and alcohol use.

Studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity. In addition, the Internet and cell phones can provide platforms for illicit and risky behaviors.

By limiting screen time and offering educational media and non-electronic formats such as books, newspapers and board games, and watching television with their children, parents can help guide their children's media experience. Putting questionable content into context and teaching kids about advertising contributes to their media literacy.

The AAP recommends that parents establish "screen-free" zones at home by making sure there are no televisions, computers or video games in children's bedrooms, and by turning off the TV during dinner. Children and teens should engage with entertainment media for no more than one or two hours per day, and that should be high-quality content. It is important for kids to spend time on outdoor play, reading, hobbies, and using their imaginations in free play.

Television and other entertainment media should be avoided for infants and children under age 2. A child's brain develops rapidly during these first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens.

## **Additional Resources**

- [Helping kids to be safe online - SafetyNet.org](#)
- [AAP Media History Form](#)
- [Talking to Kids and Teens About Social Media and Sexting](#)
- [AAP Press Room: Media Issue Kit](#)
- [Screen-Free Week Poster](#)

- See more at: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>