

PARENT HANDOUTS

Interesting T.V. Statistics

- Nearly 3 out of 4 eighth graders watch 2+ hours of TV each weekday (Brown, Brett and Bzostek, Sharon. Violence in the Lives of Children. *Cross Currents*, Issue 1, August 2003. Child Trends DataBank)
- 60% percent of American households have three or more televisions (Kaiser Family Foundation. *Kids and Media Fact Sheet*. Revised November 2001).
- A third of all 0-6 year-olds (36%) have a TV in their bedroom, more than one in four (27%) have a VCR or DVD, one in ten have a video game player, and 7% have a computer. Thirty percent of 0-3 year-olds have a TV in their room, and 43% of 4-6 year-olds do. (Kaiser Family Foundation. [Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers](#). October 2003)
- Young children (ages two through seven) are less exposed to media violence than older children, but data collected in 1999 show that they still spend more than three hours each day watching television and videos. (Kaiser Family Foundation. (1999). [Kids and media at the new millennium: a comprehensive analysis of children's media use.](#))
- The National Television Violence Study found that nearly 2 out of 3 TV programs contained some violence, averaging about 6 violent acts per hour. (Kaiser Family Foundation. [Key Facts: TV Violence](#), Spring 2003.)
- Younger children who watched news coverage of the 1991 Persian Gulf War were more disturbed by visual images of planes dropping bombs and people dying, whereas older children and teens were more upset by abstract threats of terrorism and nuclear war or the possibility of the conflict spreading. (Cantor, J., Mares, ML., Oliver, MB. Parents and children's emotional reactions to TV coverage of the Gulf War. In: Greenberg, B., and Gantz, W. *Desert Storm and the Mass Media*. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1993, p. 364-380.)
- Children who watch a lot of TV news tend to overestimate the prevalence of crime and may perceive the world to be a more dangerous place than it actually is. (Smith, S. and Wilson, B. (2002). Children's comprehension of and fear reactions to television news. *Media Psychology* 4:1-26.)
- The amount of time spent playing video games varies by age. On average, 2-7 year olds spend 8 minutes a day, 8-13 year-olds spend 32 minutes a day, and 14-18 year-olds spend 20 minutes a day playing video games. (Kaiser Family Foundation. [Key Facts: Children and Video Games](#), Fall 2002.)
- Percentage of television-time children ages 2-7 spend watching alone and unsupervised: 81 (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999. "*Kids and Media @ the New Millennium*.")
- Average time per week that the American child ages 2-17 spends



T.V. Watching in Your Home

Parents did you know?

American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations for children and TV watching¹

Children under 2 should watch NO TV

Children under 5 should watch less than two hours a day

Here are ways you can reduce TV watching in your home:

1. Move the television set(s) to less prominent locations. TV is far less tempting when it is not accessible.
2. Hide the remote control.
3. Remove the TV set from your child's bedroom. A television in the bedroom draws children away from family activities and distracts them from homework, thinking, reading, and sleeping. In addition, parents may find it difficult to monitor programs that are inappropriate or unhealthy.
4. Keep the TV off during dinner. Meals are a great time for conversation.
5. Place clear time limits on television viewing. Try to restrict viewing to a half-hour per day or one hour every other evening. Explain your rules in positive, concrete terms. Try replacing, "You can't watch TV," with, "Let's turn off the TV so we can...".
6. Avoid using TV as a baby-sitter. Involve children in household activities. Make laundry folding into a game. Give them an opportunity to help out.
7. Designate certain days of the week as TV-free days (e.g. school nights).
8. Don't use TV as a reward or punishment. This increases its power and can lead to conflict over its use.
9. Listen to your favorite music or the radio as background noise.
10. Cancel your cable subscription. Use the monthly savings to buy a game or a book.
11. Don't fret if children claim, "I'm bored!" For children, boredom often leads to creativity.
12. Don't let the TV displace what's important: family conversations, exercise, play, reading, creating, thinking and doing.

Source: T.V. Turnoff Network. <http://www.tvturnoff.org/proof.htm>

Physical Activity Guidelines for Infants

Part of the infant's day should be spent with a caregiver or parent who provides systematic opportunities for planned physical activity. These experiences should incorporate a variety of baby games such as “peek-a-boo” and “pat-a-cake” and sessions in which the child is held, rocked, and carried to new environments.

Infants should interact with parents and/or caregivers in daily physical activities that encourage exploration of their environment

Infants should be placed in safe settings that facilitate physical activity and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.

Infants’ physical activity should promote the development of movement skills

Infants should have an environment that meets or exceeds recommended safety standards.

Childcare providers and teachers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and encourage physical activity in our childcare facility.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Toddlers and Preschoolers

For toddlers, basic movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and kicking do not just appear because a child grows older, but emerge from an interaction between hereditary potential and movement experience. These behaviors are also clearly influenced by the environment. For instance, a child who does not have access to stairs may be delayed in stair climbing and a child who is discouraged from bouncing and chasing balls may lag in hand-eye coordination.

- Toddlers should participate in at least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity; preschoolers at least 60 minutes.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
- Toddlers should develop movement skills, Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills (hopping, jumping, balancing)
- Toddlers and Preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for physical activity
- Childcare providers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and promote the child's movement skill

Total time for toddler:

30 min structured + 60 min unstructured = 90 min

Total time for preschoolers:

60 min structured + 60 min unstructured = 120 min

A Sample of Some Activities to Encourage Movement

The following are a few examples of physical activities to encourage young children and their caregivers to move during their time in an early childhood setting. The companion lesson plans and training will expand on ideas and examples.

For Infants:

By the time infants are three months old, they can be encouraged to stand on the provider's lap with the caregiver holding onto the child's hands. This will help to develop head and neck control. If the child is very steady the caregiver can gently sway the infant from side to side, giving the infant additional support .

Provide opportunities to move by placing objects and toys near the child but not within touching distance so that the child moves toward the desired object.

Play games with the infant that encourages the child to move and do things for themselves, i.e., roll a soft ball toward the infant and have them reach for it.

Gently rolling, bouncing and swaying infants are excellent ways to increase the child's muscle strength. It also helps them to develop important connections between the brain and muscles.

Be sure to place infants on their stomachs when they are not sleeping or napping. This encourages head control and scooting motions. [Bright Futures, Physical Activity, 2001]

The following are excerpts from "Kids in Action, Fitness for Children, Birth to Age Five " and are reprinted here with permission. The entire booklet may be found at <http://fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction/kidsinaction> .

These activities also encourage the caregiver to be involved and moving to some extent.

Infants

Kick It!

(Fig. 1) Let your baby find out what her legs can do while she learns about cause and effect.

- Lay the baby on her back.
- Place a small pillow or a stuffed animal by the baby's feet.
- Encourage her to kick it!

Also:

- If the baby doesn't kick the object on her own, hold it just close enough to let her feel it with the bottom of her feet.
- Make sure she gets to kick with both right and left feet.
- Use language to encourage her and describe what she's doing. For example: "You're kicking the pillow!"



Fig. 1

Crossing the Midline

(Fig. 2) Have playtime activities that help your baby's right arm or leg cross over to the left and the left arm or leg cross over to the right. This crossing over is an important step in helping your baby learn.

- Place the baby in a comfortably seated position.
- Sit or kneel in front of him and hide a favorite toy behind your back.
- Make a game of handing him the toy so he has to reach across his body to get it.

Also:

- Repeat this, encouraging the use of both left and right hands, as long as the baby stays interested!



Fig. 2

Creepy/Crawly

(Fig. 4) Crawling and creeping not only help your baby get around but also use the right and left sides of the body at the same time. This helps later with reading and writing skills.

- Lay the baby on her tummy on a carpet or smooth, clean surface.
- Place a favorite toy in front of her, just out of her reach.
- Encourage her to go get it.

Also:

- Let the baby reach and retrieve the toy, but then make a game out of moving it out of reach again.
- Repeat as long as the baby stays interested.



Fig. 4

Toddlers

Heads, Bellies, Toes

(Fig. 5) This game helps with identifying body parts, flexibility, and understanding the concepts of up, down, low, and high.

- Stand facing your child.
- Beginning slowly, call out the names of the three body parts that are in the title, asking your child to touch each part as he hears its name.
- Once your child is successful at this, reverse - and mix up - the order of body parts.

Also:

- Change the tempo at which you call out the body parts - sometimes slow and sometimes fast.
- Another possibility is to start out slowly and gradually get faster.
- When your child is ready, play ***Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes***. Later, you can once again change the order of body parts and the pace at which you call them out.



Fig. 5

Let's Tiptoe

Walking on tiptoe uses the child's own body weight to develop strength. It also helps with balance!

- Show your child how to tiptoe.
- Ask her to do it with you.
- Tiptoe as long as your toddler stays interested.

Also:

- Play a piece of quiet music as you both tiptoe.
- Use imagery - for example, asking your child to pretend she's sneaking up on someone, or a kitty cat trying to catch a bird.
- Vary pathways (straight, curving, and zigzagging) and directions (forward, backward, and sideward).

Preschoolers

Heel Raises

(Fig. 9) Lifting and lowering the heels is a strength-training exercise even the youngest children can do. It also helps with balance.

- Stand facing your child.
- Hold hands.
- Slowly lift and lower your heels, encouraging your child to do the same thing at the same time.

Also:

- Pause each time you rise onto tiptoe, counting aloud to five.
- Instead of just raising your heels, you and your child can jump (two feet) or hop (one foot) lightly in place.
- Try all of these activities both slowly and quickly.



Fig. 9

Beanbag Balance

(Fig. 10) When it comes to balancing activities, this is an all-time favorite for children.

- Place a beanbag or a small, soft toy on your child's head.
- Invite her to walk from one point in the room to another without dropping the beanbag.
- If she has to, she can hold on to it at first.

Also:

- Ask her to balance the beanbag as she walks both slowly and quickly, in different directions (forward, backward, or sideward), and in different pathways (straight, curving, and zigzagging).

- Invite her to try balancing the beanbag on other body parts, like a hand, shoulder, or elbow.