

# Growing Up with Television

from a Newspaper Article

Children younger than 2 years old should not watch television and older children should not have TV sets nor computers in their bedrooms, according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. "As pediatricians, we are taking all the research concerns into account, and trying to raise the bar a bit, as suggestions for most effective parenting, said Dr. Marjorie Hogan, the lead author of the report which appears in the August issue of Pediatrics magazine.

No reliable research has been done about how television viewing affects children younger than 2, Hogan said. But the academy based its recommendations for such children on knowledge of what babies need for proper brain development--mainly, close-up interaction with

older people-- and the common-sense reasoning that, if they are watching television, babies are not being touched, cuddled, and talked to.

Brochures explaining the positive and negative effects of television on children are available to the 55,000 members of the American Academy of Pediatrics. These brochures include suggestions about how to guide families toward positive uses such as talking about the shows they watch and discussing what they have seen. One suggestion is that televisions and computers be kept in common rooms, where parents can monitor and participate in their children's use.

But, John C. Wright, who directs the Center for Research on the Influences

of Television on Children at the University of Texas at Austin, said that parents who are careful can ensure that these electronic media benefit children. “Children who watch educational television are better prepared for school than those raised on a steady diet of comedies and action adventure shows. These children also carry an academic edge through high school,” Wright said Tuesday at a parenting conference in Washington.

As examples of quality programming, Wright cited PBS shows such as Arthur and cable network shows such as Nickelodeon’s “Blue’s Clues” and “Gullah Gullah Island”.

Aletha Huston, an expert on children and television, also disagrees that television is harmful to the very young. “Very young children

can learn a lot from well-designed television.” The problem, she pointed out, is that young children tend to watch inappropriate programming when they are watching television with older children or adults. “The real issue is the content of the TV, not the TV itself. You wouldn’t read adult romances or junky books to children, but you wouldn’t stop reading books to children.”

In 1997, the American Academy of Pediatrics began its campaign to educate its doctors and the public about how media can influence children positively as well as negatively. For example, studies have shown that programs about the effects of drugs or tobacco can influence adolescent behavior for the better.

## Check Your Comprehension

\_\_\_1. In this passage, the word **media** means--

- A. computers
- B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- C. children who watch television
- D. children's doctors

\_\_\_2. This article leads you to believe that--

- A. it is best for children to watch no television.
- B. television can help babies develop good language skills.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. researchers believe that television and computers influence children's lives.

\_\_\_3. Which of these statements is a fact from the article?

- A. Dr. Marjorie Hogan works at the University of Texas.
- B. Parents should turn off the television set when children are home.
- C. Programs about the effects of drugs or tobacco can influence adolescent behavior for the better.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_4. It is clear from this article that--

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. research has shown that watching television for long periods of time prevents the brain from developing to its potential.

C. kids are a real problem to doctors.

D. children's books can be just as dangerous as television.

\_\_\_5. The main idea of the article is-

A. Television is bad for children.

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. Doctors and researchers are concerned with the effects of media on children.

D. Certain shows are better than others for children to watch on television.

\_\_\_6. The best summary for the sixth paragraph is --

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. research has shown that watching television for long periods of time prevents the brain from developing to its potential.

C. kids are a real problem to doctors.

D. children's books can be just as dangerous as television.

Your Turn:

Based on what you have read and your own experiences, how has television affected your own life? What changes should our country make in television programming?

## Check Your Comprehension

\_\_\_ 1. In this passage, the word **media** means-

- A. computers
- B. computers and television
- C. children who watch television
- D. children's doctors

\_\_\_ 2. This article leads you to believe that--

- A. it is best for children to watch no television.
- B. television can help babies develop good language skills.
- C. Aletha Houston and Dr. Hogan agree on the effects of television on young children.
- D. computers which are in quiet rooms like bedrooms help students learn best.

\_\_\_ 3. Which of these statements is a fact from the article?

- A. Dr. Marjorie Hogan works at the University of Texas.
- B. Parents should turn off the television set when children are home.
- C. Programs about the effects of drugs or tobacco can influence adolescent behavior for the better.
- D. One of the best programs for young children is "Blue's Clues."

\_\_\_4. It is clear from this article that--

- A. even experts disagree about the effects of television on children.
- B. research has shown that watching television for long periods of time prevents the brain from developing to its potential.
- C. kids are a real problem to doctors.
- D. children's books can be just as dangerous as television.

\_\_\_5. The main idea of the article is--

- A. Television is bad for children.
- B. Parents should read to children to prevent them from watching television.
- C. Doctors and researchers are concerned with the effects of media on children.
- D. Certain shows are better than others for children to watch on television.

- \_\_\_6. The best summary for the sixth paragraph is --
- A. One expert, Aletha Huston, believes that it is better for children to read books than watch television.
  - B. Aletha Huston is an expert on children and television.
  - C. Aletha Huston, an expert on children and television, believes that well-designed television programs can help children learn a lot.
  - D. One expert believes that you should not read junky books to children, but you should read to children.

Your Turn:

Based on what you have read and your own experiences, how has television affected your own life? What changes should our country make in television programming?