

GOOD BEGINNINGS NEVER END

N.C. Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center • 1-800-246-6731

April 1999

Key Points

- American children ages 2-11 spend almost 20 hours per week watching television.
- Studies show that 10 or more hours of television watching per week negatively affects academic performance.
- By the time a child is 11, he will have seen 8,000 murders on television.
- Excessive television viewing has been linked to obesity: 14% of American children are seriously overweight.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 2 not watch TV at all.

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Break Free of TV

Once upon a time, children spent their days running and playing. Today they're more likely to sit in front of the television. TV viewing not only takes the place of healthy physical activity but also creativity, reading, and thinking in children.

Numerous studies have raised serious concerns about the impact of excessive television viewing on human development and behavior, especially among young children. Excessive television viewing is a prime culprit in today's leading health epidemics: aggressive behavior, depression, inactivity, obesity, and heart disease. Health care professionals are concerned about the following issues:

- Television commercials promote a high fat, high sugar, and high salt diet.
- Children tend to snack while watching TV.
- Obesity and lack of exercise are threatening children with serious health consequences such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and colon cancer.

- Young children often accept cruel and aggressive TV scenes as real and normal.
- Aggressive behavior learned at an early age may be difficult to change.

What can be done about this public health problem?

This April 22-28, 1999, millions of individuals in thousands of homes, schools, churches, and community groups will voluntarily turn off their TV sets during National TV-Turnoff Week. They will rediscover that life can be more healthy, constructive, and rewarding with more time and less TV.

"You've got to be kidding!" is a common response to National TV-Turnoff Week. We're not kidding and we have lots of ideas in this newsletter and at the Resource Center to help you plan alternate activities. As one teacher put it, "To me, it's not what happens when you're watching TV, but what doesn't happen." Think of all the music you can play, the books you can read, the pictures you can color, and the gardens you can plant. Once you're TV-free you'll wonder how you ever had time to watch so much!

North Carolina Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center

Providing Training, Consultation & Resources for North Carolina's Child Care Community

March Call Statistics



Number of calls from Family Child Care Providers.....	308
Primary Reason for Calling	No. of Calls
Dental Health.....	168
NC Regulations	27
Handwashing	13
TEACH	5
Infant Care	5
First Aid	4
ABC Book.....	28

Immunization	16
Nutrition	7
Asthma	20
Other	15

We acknowledge Stephanie Dunbar, MPH, RD and Linnea Larson, MPH, RD, pediatric nutritionists from the NC Division of Women's and Children's Health for their contributions to the March newsletter



Training Opportunities

May TBA

Parent Involvement, Southern Pines
910-692-3005

May TBA

Behavior Management,
Southern Pines
910-692-3005

May 8

Special Saturday for Day Care,
Raleigh
919-856-7774

May 8

How to Create a Multi-Age Group
Learning Environment,
Winston-Salem
Teresa Mack (336) 722-1642

May 13

Childhood Bereavement, Cary
919-677-1400

May 13

Caring for Children with Seizure
Disorders, Chapel Hill
919-967-3272

May 15

Be Active Kids, Raleigh
Carol Mitchell, 919-250-1094

May 18

Ooey Goey (science exploration),
Gaston Co.
Audrey Hunt, 704-867-5275

May 18

Food Safety & Sanitation in Child
Care, Raleigh
919-832-7175

May 18-20

Project WILD, Jacksonville
910-938-0336

May 20

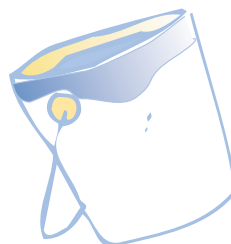
Constructive Discipline, Cary
919-677-1400

May 21-22

Western Regional Child Care
Conference, Asheville
828-255-5725

May 27

Fire Extinguisher Class for Child
Care Providers, Catawba County
828-328-8228



Health and Safety Alert

Look Out for Lead!

You can help children in your care stay healthy and avoid a common poison-lead.

Lead is common in buildings and homes built before 1980. If children spend time in a pre-1980 building, there is a chance they may be exposed to lead. The older the building, the greater the chance of lead.

Children 9-36 months old can easily be poisoned because they put their hands and other objects in their mouths. Any painted or varnished surface within the reach of a child can be a serious hazard. A child chewing or mouthing the surface of a lead-painted door or window, for example, can be severely poisoned.

Most children with lead poisoning don't look sick. Lead poisoning must be determined by a blood test. Sometimes the effects of lead poisoning don't show up until a child is school age. It can cause problems with learning, growth, and behavior.

You can prevent these problems and protect children by calling your environmental health specialist at the local health department if you suspect children in your care have been exposed to lead.

The ABC's of Safe and Healthy Child Care...

Year Round Ideas to Break Free of TV

1. Move the TV to a less prominent location in the house.
2. Keep the TV off during meals.
3. Avoid using TV as a babysitter.
4. Designate certain days of the week as TV-free days (e.g. school nights).
5. Don't use TV as a reward or punishment. (This increases its power and can lead to conflict over its use.)
6. Listen to your favorite music or the radio instead of using TV as a background noise.
7. Cancel your cable subscription. Use the savings and take a vacation!
8. Don't worry if children claim "I'm bored!" For children, boredom often leads to creativity.
9. Remember what's important: conversation, exercise, play, reading, creating, thinking and doing. Don't let TV take the place of those.
10. Consider living without TV.

Alternate Activities for Children

Instead of watching TV:

1. Read a book.
2. Listen to the radio.
3. Go fishing.
4. Take a nature walk.
5. Plan a picnic.
6. Bake bread.
7. Plant a garden.
8. Sing a song.
9. Make puppets out of old socks.
10. Have a puppet show.
11. Blow bubbles.
12. Dance.



National Child Care Provider Day

Child Care Organizations nationwide have joined together to declare May 7, 1999 to be the fourth annual National Provider Appreciation Day. This day of recognition is to be celebrated annually on the Friday before Mother's Day. Parents with children in child care are encouraged to take this day to show their child care providers how much they appreciate them.



Books about Television

- The Wretched Stone*
by Chris Van Allsburg
- The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV*
by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- Mouse TV* by Matt Novak
- The Week Mom Unplugged the TVs*
by Terry Wolfe Phelan
- The Library Card* by Jerry Spinelli
- The Day Our TV Broke Down*
by Betty R. Wright



Test Your Knowledge

Deidra is writing a letter to the parents of children in her care asking for their participation at home during National TV-Turnoff Week. Which of the following statements could she use in her letter? Call us at 1-800-CHOOSE-1 with your answer and receive a "Break Free of TV" poster if you are among the first 100 callers.

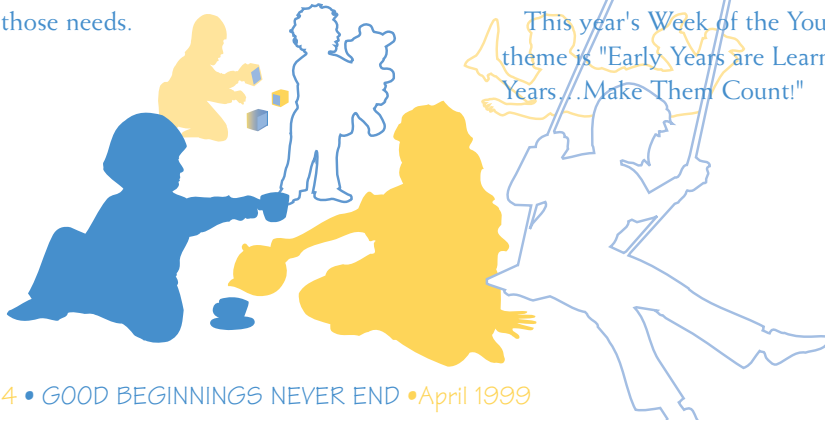
1. Excessive TV viewing promotes obesity in children.
2. Children under the age of 2 years should not watch any TV.
3. Children can learn aggressive behavior from watching TV.
4. There are many activities you can substitute for TV viewing.

Week of the Young Child April 18-24, 1999

The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration each April sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to support the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971 recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later in life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to focus on the needs of young children and their families and to plan how we will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.

This year's Week of the Young Child theme is "Early Years are Learning Years...Make Them Count!"



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

or if you would like to send suggestions or comments

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