

General Guidelines Concerning TV

1. Limit TV time: The American Association of Pediatricians recommends fewer than 2 hours of TV per day. Parents seem to believe that their children will not agree to these limits, but elementary and middle-school children can usually be persuaded to cut down on TV. Make it a rule and enforce it!
2. Help your child make a list of other activities to do instead of watching TV: Have your child make a pie chart of what they do with their spare time, and tell them the doctor says that more than 2 hour a day of TV is unhealthy. Then fill in the pie chart with other activities. They can even interview a grandparent about what they used to do before they had TV. Make trying new activities into a game. TV watching can become a habit, but so can the alternatives (riding a bike, playing with friends, etc.).
3. Do not allow your child to eat in front of the TV: children (and adults) do not realize how many calories they consume when they watch TV. Don't eat while distracted; make meal-time into family-time
4. Teach your child the purpose of commercials: Explain that companies who produce unhealthy foods are trying to make money by tempting children with their commercials.
5. Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom: When you put a TV in your child's bedroom, you immediately lose control of how much your child is watching, as well as *what* your child is watching. You also isolate family members and decrease interaction.
6. Monitor your child's TV use: the parent has to be responsible and has to be aware of how much TV a child is watching. A TV should not be a baby-sitter.
7. Do NOT use TV to reward or punish a child. This tends to make TV seem *more important* to the child.

Suggestions and Tips for your Tele-Vacation

- Specialize each day of the week. For example, make Monday into "Pet Day" – instead of watching TV, go play with your pet. Make Tuesday into "Family Day" – instead of hangin' out with the TV, hang out with your family. Et cetera.
- Make a competition out of the week: kids vs. parents, or kids vs. teachers.
- Get outside and go for a walk or a bike ride.
- Spend time with your pets.
- Have friends over.
- Read a book. Read to your children. *Read.*
- Write a letter – a *real* letter- to a friend or relative.
- Visit the library for story-time.
- Look through and organize family photos.
- Have a garage-sale.

Ideas for Reducing Screen Time

Keep a viewing log to track the number of hours spent in front of the TV.

Have a regular family game night each week with no TV.

Turn off the TV during meals and have a conversation.

Don't turn on the TV until all homework and chores are finished.

When a TV show is over, turn of the TV and do something else.

Don't watch the football game; go *play* one.

Internet Addresses to Visit for Information About TV Turn-Offs

<http://www.unplugyourkids.com/category/everything-else/tv-turnoff-week/tv-turnoff-week-blog-challenge/>

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/live-it/screen-time.htm>

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/live-it/get-started.htm>

<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>

<http://www.screentime.org/>

[http://www.familysafemedia.com/alternatives to tv handbook.html](http://www.familysafemedia.com/alternatives_to_tv_handbook.html)

[http://www.familysafemedia.com/token tv time manager.html](http://www.familysafemedia.com/token_tv_time_manager.html)

[http://www.familysafemedia.com/tv timer hopscotch bob.html](http://www.familysafemedia.com/tv_timer_hopscotch_bob.html)

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