

Raising Children on TV Disrupts Their Ability to Pay Attention and Learn

(NaturalNews – PF Louis) It's almost intuitively obvious to most that too much TV viewing is conducive to physical deterioration and not conducive to mental development. But what types of viewing at what ages affects children's ability to pay attention over amounts of time and assimilate actual learning from experience or studying has been a topic of several studies.

One of those studies even considered background TV as a major distraction. That is leaving the TV on most of the time even when not watching it for a specific purpose while a child is doing homework, or if parents watch a specific TV show while the kids are around doing whatever.

This study has determined that a TV show's momentary distractions from whatever a child is doing helps promote a poor attention span or a tendency to be easily bored. It's a sort of "there's something more important or interesting on the tube" tendency.

The study's paper was titled "Background television in the homes of American children."

Background TV is like secondhand cigarette smoke; it pollutes others

The University of Iowa (UI) publication *Iowa Now* interviewed one of the lead authors of that study, Deborah Linebarger, associate professor in the UI College Education's Department of Teaching and Learning. Locally, she worked with two UI

graduate students in her department and networked with others in different universities.

The other university study contributors were Mathew Lapierre at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication and Jessica Piotrowski of the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Linebarger and her UI grad student associates conducted lengthy telephone surveys, often close to an hour long, among 1,454 households with [children](#) just under one year old to eight years old. Here are some of her comments from the *Iowa Now* interview:

"We discovered that the average American child was exposed to 232.2 minutes of background [television](#) on a given day. Using multiple regression analyses, we determined that younger children, children living in single-parent homes, and African-American children were exposed to significantly more background television than their older, multi-parent, and non-African-American peers."

Linebarger added, "What was really distressing was the fact that the youngest kids, the ones under 2, were exposed to 5.5 hours of background TV per day."

By calculating expected *active* TV watching and adding to the background TV, the researchers found that children two years and younger are exposed to six or seven hours of TV media daily.

And if we examine content of what's going on with TVs that are simply kept on most of the time, there's a lot of advertising of bad foods and bad medicine or a lot of bad or silly news, all in short visual clips and in sound bites.

This is how kids and are being programmed, and perhaps you

were, or are, too. Moderate *active* viewing can be interesting, exciting or even occasionally uplifting or informative. Even then, too much is simply debilitating at any age. The younger the [child](#), the more impressionable. This includes video gaming as well, which are often violent and addictive into later years.

It disrupts physical playing and social intercourse even within families. The tube has too much influence, which is why researchers recommend less active TV time and no background TV. It's an enticing consciousness pollutant, and it can be the model of behavior to greater or lesser extent among children.

Regarding parents' attitudes about background TV, Linebarger, who has four children of her own, explained: "[P]arents tend to leave the TV on all day even when no one is actively watching it. When I come into my house and no one is there, I like to turn on the TV to keep me company. And it's easy to forget to turn it off... you get up and leave the room with it still there and on in the background."

Sources for this article include:

<http://now.uiowa.edu>

<http://now.uiowa.edu>

<http://psychcentral.com>