

Electronic Media and Young Children

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Abstract

As an early care and education professional, nurses are also a child care provider; nurses are also a family educator and a role model for positive care giving. By educating families about the dangers of electronic media and by creating a sensible media policy in their program, nurses can make a lasting difference in the lives of the children.

Keywords: Electronic Media; Children; Effects and Management.

Introduction

Television is a daily presence in the lives of most young children, and video games on consoles and computers are also widely used by children. But how does exposure to television, computers, electronic games and other such media affect children's health and development?

The first 2 years of life are considered a critical time for brain development. TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with parents and others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. As kids get older, too much screen time can interfere with activities such as being physically active, reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family.

Of course, TV in moderation can be a good thing: Preschoolers can get help learning the alphabet on public television, grade schoolers can learn about wildlife on nature shows, and parents can keep up with current events on the evening news. No doubt about it — TV can be an excellent educator and entertainer.

Video games are considered as time-wasters, and worse by parents. Some education experts think that these games corrupt the brain. Playing violent video games are easily blamed by the media and some experts as the reason why some young people become violent or commit extreme anti-social behavior. Video games can actually have many benefits – the main one is making kids smart. Video games may actually teach kids high-level thinking skills that they will need in the future. "Video games change your brain," according to University of Wisconsin psychologist C. Shawn Green. Playing video games change the brain's physical structure the same way as do learning to read, playing the piano, or navigating using a map. Much like exercise can build muscle, the powerful combination of concentration and rewarding surges of neurotransmitters like dopamine strengthen neural circuits that can build the brain.

Below are the good and bad effects of video games.

Positive effects of electronic media

- Following instructions
- Problem solving and logic

- Hand-eye coordination, fine motor and spatial skills
- Planning, resource management and logistics
- Multitasking, simultaneous tracking of many shifting variables and managing multiple objectives
- Quick thinking, making fast analysis and decisions
- Accuracy
- Strategy and anticipation
- Situational awareness
- Developing reading and math skills
- Perseverance
- Pattern recognition
- Estimating skills
- Inductive reasoning and hypothesis testing
- Memory
- Concentration
- Improved ability to rapidly and accurately recognize visual information
- Taking risks
- How to respond to challenges
- How to respond to frustrations
- How to explore and rethink goals
- Teamwork and cooperation when played with others , Management
- Simulation, real world skills

Negative effects of electronic media

- Poor nutrition and obesity
- Television and electronic media displace social interaction
- Violence and aggressive behavior
- Tobacco and alcohol
- Attention problems
- School readiness
- Some video games teach kids the wrong values
- Games can confuse reality and fantasy
- Poor school grades
- Addiction to video games increases their depression and anxiety levels. Addicted kids also exhibit social phobias.

- Kids spending too much time playing video games may exhibit impulsive behavior and have attention problems.

What can we do?

Below are several tips for protecting children from the adverse effects of electronic media.

- Television and electronic media are inappropriate for children from birth to 24 months, under any circumstances. Educate parents not to use television to entertain or educate these youngest and most vulnerable children. Infants and toddlers need frequent human interaction for social, emotional and cognitive development.
- Child care settings should consider a television-free policy for children of all ages, particularly if the children are being exposed to electronic media at home.
- For children age 2 years and over, caregivers and parents should limit television viewing to educational programs designed for children. In child care settings where there is some television present, children should be exposed to it only for short periods of time.
- Don't leave young children alone with television or electronic games on. Stay with them to monitor the content of the media and their reactions.
- Answer any questions they have about what they are seeing. Television and other electronic media should not be used as a "baby sitter" of young children.
- Teach children to be critical viewers of commercial messages.
- Evaluate the nutritional value of foods promoted on television, and offer children healthy alternatives.
- Educate families to create and implement an electronic media policy at home. The policy should provide children with clear guidance about how much and what types of programs and games are permitted. All of the adults in the setting should agree on the policy and enforce it consistently.

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