



The Average American Child:

Watches 25 hours of television each week.

Plays computer or video games for 7 hours each week.

Accesses the internet from home for 4 hours each week (among those who have internet access).

Why is media an issue?

Technology is a part of society so why shouldn't it be a major part of our children's lives? It is important for kids to be **knowledgeable** about technology but the negative influence that media can have is **real**.

1. The leading cause of the increase in youth obesity is the increase in screen time. 30.3% of kids ages 6 to 11 are overweight and 15.3% are obese.
2. Children who watch more than three hours of television a day are 50% more likely to be obese than kids who watch fewer than two hours.
3. Obesity puts children at risk for serious health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and bone and joint problems as well as social problems and low self-esteem.
4. TV and video games increase the need for instant gratification in children. This often leads to kids reading less because there is no instant gratification and it seems boring.
5. Families that use electronic media less and read more have children who do better in school.
6. Parents who talk to their kids about television programs report media having a positive effect on their children.

How to avoid potential negative effects of media influences on our children:

- » Take TVs and computers out of kid's bedrooms. Place TVs and computers in an area of the house where their use can be monitored.
- » Establish clear rules about how often and when TVs, computers and video games can be used.
- » Watch TV with your kids and talk to them about what is on the screen. Explain what is real and what is not as well as anything that is upsetting or confusing.
- » Monitor kids use of the internet closely. Talk to kids regularly about internet use and don't allow them to give out personal information in cyberspace.
- » Restrict video game playing time and be aware of the content of video games.



Increase non-screen time:

Read books

Play

Color

Play games

Physical activity

Go outside

Listen to music

Limiting Screen Time

Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics for screen time is as follows:

- » Caution against screen time completely for children under age 2.
- » No more than one to two hours a day of quality screen time for kids older than 2 years old.

*Information from The National Institute on Media and the Family, Dr. David Walsh;
MediaWise.org*

