

# TV TURNOFF WEEK

APRIL 24-30, 2006



*TURN OFF YOUR TV AND...*

**Bond better with your child.** TV time is often at the expense of quality family time.

**Help prevent childhood obesity.** Prevention is much easier than intervention.

**Help prevent violent behavior.** Witnessing violence encourages violent behavior and teaches that it is acceptable.

**Help protect your child from nightmares.** Children seven and under are unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality and can be traumatized by watching violence.

**Foster a sense of safety in the world.** Children are likely to believe that the frightening things they see on TV will happen to them or those they love.

**Help your child learn respect for all races.** Research shows that TV reinforces racial stereotypes.

**Help your child achieve his/her full potential.** Research also indicates that TV reinforces stereotypical gender roles.

**Help your child develop social skills.** By turning off TV your child has more opportunities to relate to others.

**Help your child develop his/her senses.** Television is passive. Playing, reading and other activities can engage all five of your child's senses—the optimum situation for learning.

## Fast Facts

- ☑ In 2003 50% of US households had **3 or more TV's**
- ☑ The average American child views **40,000 commercials per year**
- ☑ 97% of American children 6 and under have brand name products based on TV characters
- ☑ Children develop **brand loyalty by the age of 2**
- ☑ A 1997 study found that children ages 4 to 9 **“perceived most cartoon characters in stereotypical ways: boys were violent and active and girls were domestic, interested in boys, and concerned with appearances.”**
- ☑ A 1996 study found that the amount of time an adolescent watches soaps, movies and music videos is associated with their degree of **body dissatisfaction and desire to be thin.**

Source: [www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)



## Silencing Our Noisy World

Lord, it seems that our television sets,  
stereos, and radios are constantly blaring.

How can we ever hear your voice and your guidance  
when we continuously surround ourselves  
with so much noise?

Remind us to take some time each day  
to shut off the noise of our world for awhile  
so we can speak and listen to you.

Renee Bartkowski, Family Prayers for Daily Grace, Liguori, MO, Liguori Publications 2003.



## UNPLUG and Turn On

Go to the Library · Start a garden · Write a letter · Take a walk · Swim · Climb a tree · Start a journal · Make a scrapbook · Cook a meal with friends · Make costumes and have a parade · Play hopscotch, hide & seek, or freeze tag · Learn about the native trees and flowers in your area · Watch the clouds · Look at the stars · Tutor a child · Attend local plays and sporting events · Listen to music · Do yard work or make household repairs · Take a class · Start a hobby · Visit the zoo · Go to a museum · Study sign language · Volunteer at a local organization · Call a friend · Sing a song · Plant flowers · Ride a bike ·

### To Learn More, Visit These Websites

[www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)

Empowering people to take control of technology

[www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org)

Explaining media's impact and what we can do about it

[www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)

Helping us have choice and voice in the media we consume

[www.mindonthemedia.org](http://www.mindonthemedia.org)

Fostering critical analysis of media messages

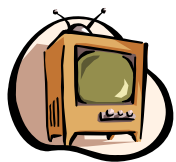
[www.familyfirst.net/famlife/kidsmedia.asp](http://www.familyfirst.net/famlife/kidsmedia.asp)

Parents' guide to media culture

[www.commercialalert.org](http://www.commercialalert.org)

Keeping the commercial culture in its sphere

While the FLO makes every effort to assure the appropriateness of these web sites, we do not maintain them and are not responsible for their content, accuracy, opinions, or links.



## TELEVISION: The Sobering Effects

We know that exposure to television violence increases children's aggression and that exposure to TV commercials increases children's desires for consumer goods. We know that the more TV children watch, the less physically fit they are and the lower their reading scores. In addition to its effects on children, TV affects the family as a whole. Television invades family time, especially dinner. Competition for the TV is a big source of conflict between siblings. Control of the remote control often means having control of the family.

A program watched together at least provides opportunities for family discussion. But when children have TV sets in their bedrooms, they are free to retreat into solitary space, without the possibility of conversation with their parents. For the most part, TV teaches children to approach their lives as individualists, pleasure seekers, and consumers. As humans, we are social creatures and are happiest when we are interacting productively, face-to-face with others.

Television has great potential. But by and large, it comes with implicit negative values to be overcome:

- ◆ *TV nourishes a culture of disrespect.* Disrespect is often the source of humor in comedies, and tension in dramas.
- ◆ *TV portrays parents as incompetent and befuddled,* and children as wise (and smart alecy) beyond their years.
- ◆ *TV teaches instant gratification,* especially through commercials.
- ◆ *TV teaches that happiness is having things.*
- ◆ *TV represents sex without commitment or consequences,* either emotional or physical.
- ◆ *TV desensitizes children to the effects of violence.*

Take Back Your Kids/Confident Parenting in Turbulent Times by William J. Doherty, Ph.D. © 2000, Sorin Books.

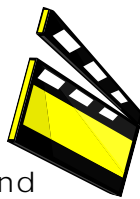
## More Fast Facts

MTV has affected every media type. Consider this:

- ☑ 25% of MTV videos contain alcohol or tobacco use.
- ☑ Nearly one-fourth of MTV videos portray overt violence. Weapon-carrying with attractive role models being the aggressor is depicted in more than 80% of the violent videos.
- ☑ One study found that 75% of MTV videos that tell a story involve sexual imagery, and over 50% involve violence—usually against women.
- ☑ The use of violence by music video stars makes it seem normal and more acceptable.
- ☑ At least two experiments show that watching MTV results in more permissive attitudes about sex.

Source: www.mediafamily.org

## Take ACTION!



**Limit TV viewing.** Make rules about school nights and mornings. Turn the television off during mealtimes. Decide in advance with your children which shows they will watch each week. Designate certain days of the week as TV-free days.

**Take the TV out of your child's bedroom.**

**Make books available.** Visit the Library frequently. Give books as gifts.

**Read with and to your children.** Ask them about the books they are reading. Encourage them to explore different genres.

**Create a TV coupon system.** Allocate a certain number per week. "Cash in" unused coupons for a special activity.

**Set a good example** in your own television watching by being deliberate about what you watch and don't watch. Patronize good programs and advocate for more.

**Use the VCR to your advantage.** Tape a good show and schedule a special family viewing—complete with popcorn.

**Don't make the TV the focal point in the room** or leave it on to provide background sight or sound.

**Utilize reviews and parent guides** to learn about the content of current television programs.

**Watch TV with your children** to see what the shows are like and how your children react to them. Discuss them with your children.

**Don't use the TV as a babysitter** to keep your children occupied.

**Don't use TV as a reward.**

Experiment with a **TV-free night each week** and use the gained time for family activities. Then experiment with a TV-free week each year.

Sources: www.mediafamily.org and Take Back Your Kids/Confident Parenting in Turbulent Times by William J. Doherty, Ph.D. © 2000, Sorin Books.