

[IMAGE]

## May I Have Your Attention, Please?

It's been a rough morning: You've been chasing your active toddler around for hours, and it's not even noon! You're tempted to pop in a video so you can rest for a few minutes; after all, what's the harm if your child watches a little television? More than you might think, according to a new study.

Research recently published in *Pediatrics* shows that the more time young children spend watching television, the more likely they are to develop attention problems by age 7. Researchers studied two groups of children - ages 1 and 3. On average, the children viewed 2.2 and 3.6 hours of television each day, respectively (although some watched as many as 12 or more hours). Ten percent of those same children had developed attention-related problems by the age of 7.

The researchers concluded that early childhood television viewing may be associated with inattention later on, and speculated that the risk increases with every additional hour of television watched; however, they add that additional research is still needed on the subject to assess the full impact of TV on childhood development.

But why take chances with your little one? Before reaching for that remote, try occupying your children through more productive means, such as books, blocks or puzzles. These activities will help build their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and they may reduce the risk of developing behavioral problems down the line.

### *Reference:*

Dimitri AC, Zimmerman FJ, DiGiuseppe DL, McCarty CA. Early television exposure and subsequent attentional problems in children. *Pediatrics* 2004;113(4):708-13.

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