



# Malden Public Schools Title I Parent Connection

## Taming the TV Habits of Your Children

During a long school vacation week or on a rainy day, after my two children have spent the last hour fighting about every little thing, I must confess that I have turned on the television to get some peace and quiet. However, the impact of what children watch and how long they watch TV is far reaching. Be aware of the impact this media source is having on your children's health and academic well-being and become good consumers of its use in your home.

### Some Facts about TV Watching

- € Children aged 8 to 18 spend an average of 4 hours a day watching television in addition to another 2 hours in front of a computer or playing video games. The increase of other media devices such as cell phones and laptops has allowed for more TV watching on the go.
- € The more TV children watch the more likely they are to be inactive, eat more, and thus be overweight.
- € Children's programming is just as violent as adult TV. Just think of any recent animated movie. The more TV children watch, the more likely they are to be desensitized to violence and thus exhibit aggressive behaviors.
- € The more TV children watch the more likely they are to do poorly in school since they are less likely to be reading or doing other school related activities. While the amount of time children are watching TV is growing, the amount of time children are reading is declining.

(For more statistics on children's TV viewing habits, see <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/8010.pdf>)

### Key Tips for Taming the TV Habits of Your Child

- € Keep the television in the family or living room. Children who have televisions in their bedroom spend more time watching TV. You are also better able to monitor what your children are watching when it is in a central location.
- € Limit TV watching. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children under the age of 2 watch no TV. Children aged two and older should watch no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality television.
- € Turn off the television when nobody is watching it, during meal times, and when it is time to do homework.
- € Create alternatives to the TV. Have books, art supplies, and board games as fun alternatives. Do these activities as a family. Better yet, go outside and toss around a baseball, kick a soccer ball, or walk to the closest playground.
- € Watch television with your child. Teach them to be savvy consumers of television and the commercials. Talk about your own beliefs and values and how they relate to what you have seen.

(For more tips and information, see <http://www.parentfurther.com/technology-media>)

While the likelihood of eliminating TV or any other media source from our children's lives is unlikely, we can limit their impact on our children's overall well-being and teach our children some valuable lessons along the way.

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