

Parents and infants communicate less when the TV is on (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2009; 163: 554-558)

The more time infants and toddlers spend in front of the TV, the less exposure they have to adult voices and the less likely they are to speak themselves, researchers in USA found. The findings strengthen a suspected link between infant TV exposure and delayed language development. Each hour spent with a switched on TV was associated with significant reductions in the child's vocalization. Each additional hour of TV viewing was linked with 770 fewer words that a child heard from an adult during the recording session— a 7% decrease compared to the average number of words heard by kids in house holds where a TV is not on. Since 1999, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that pediatricians discourage the watching of TV or other screen media by children younger than two.

COMMENTS More TV time equals less human interaction. This is contrary to the claims by companies that make educational DVDs for infants and market them as tools to promote interaction between child and parent.

Simple way to identify high BP in kids (*Pediatrics* 2009;123: e972-e974)

It is a well known fact that almost 75 percent of cases of hypertension and 90 percent of cases of pre-hypertension in children and adolescents go undiagnosed. One of the main reasons for the under-diagnosis is the complex chart currently used to identify high blood pressure in children. To differentiate between normal and abnormal readings, one has to, not only remember the variety of blood pressure ranges, but also know the child's height percentile— which can be difficult to verify, especially in non-primary care settings. The researcher of this study have now simplified the chart - focusing solely

on a child's age and gender - eliminating the need for a height percentile and reducing the number of values in the blood pressure table from 476 to just 64. Researchers reduced the systolic and diastolic blood pressure cut-off values to one value for girls and one value for boys for each year of life from ages 3 to 18 plus for re-designing the chart. They used the lower limit of height (5th percentile) in the abnormal blood pressure range for a given gender and age. Any reading at or above the listed numbers in the chart will indicate a child who needs further evaluation by a physician.

COMMENTS Children with high blood pressure often become adults with heart disease and other serious medical conditions. This new screening tool can quickly and easily identify children and adolescents whose blood pressure readings merit further evaluation by a pediatrician.

Association between asthma symptoms and obesity in preschool (4-5 year old) children (*J Asthma* 2009;46: 362-365)

Researchers in Australia studied the association between asthma and obesity in preschool children. The prevalence of wheeze in the previous 12 months in the preschool population was 23.7%. In the cohort, 13.7% children were classified as overweight and 5.7% as obese. A significant relationship was identified between "wheeze in the last 12 months" ($P < 0.01$), "wheeze ever" ($P < 0.001$) and "asthma ever" ($P < 0.001$) with the trend towards obesity. The relationship was significant for both male and female sex with the exception of "wheeze in the last 12 months" in obese females. ($P = 0.09$).

COMMENTS There is an association between asthma symptoms and obesity in preschool children also and not only in school going children and adolescents. This is one more reason to prevent obesity in children as a whole.

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