

Taking Control of Your Child's 'Screen Time'

Television can become a regular and convenient babysitter. It is important to be concerned about what TV shows or games your child is exposed to as:

- Violent TV and games increase likelihood of aggressive play and fights with others
- Too much violent TV can foster can cognitive habits
- TV watching fosters passivity, discourages conversation and physical play

What to do?

- *Set Limits* on the time children spent on TV etc.
 - One hour a day is plenty, especially for pre-schoolers
 - Homework should be completed first
 - Be firm and consistent about the household rules
- *Supervise type of program watched*
 - Teach your children which programs or games are forbidden
 - Programs should be ones specifically designed for children
- *Encourage more physical and social activities and reading*
 - *Read to your children as much as possible*
 - *These help children learn social skills and how to problem solve*
- *Set bedtime which is not altered by TV programs and computer games*
 - Don't put TV and video games in children's bedrooms
- *Praise your children for good viewing habits*
 - e.g. turning off TV at the end of the show
- *Watch TV with young people* you can use this time to talk through topics or characters
 - Bring up discussions like trust, sharing or more adult discussions such as sex and drugs for older children