

How Video Games Affect Young Children

Interactive video games can have a positive impact on children. They can be educational and improve manual dexterity as well as computer literacy. However, there are many **negative consequences of video games for children. Children may have or become:**

- **Aggressive/Violent**
- **Difficulty focusing**
- **Impulsiveness**
- **Mood swings**
- **Hyperactive**
- **Sleep Disorders (avoid television and video games before sleep)**
- **Eating Disorders**
- **Obese**
- **Addicted to video games**
- **School/Academic Difficulties**

Toddlers

Studies recommend that **those younger than two years old** should not be exposed to any media (television or video games). This is because they do not have the cognitive ability to make sense of the blur of shapes and colors they see on the screen. A child's brain develops rapidly during these first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens.

Older Toddlers through Preschool

Studies recommend that **those two years old through Preschool** *should have a half hour of limited media time* (television or video games). It is better for children to have face-to-face interaction and to stimulate their creativity and imaginations.

School Age Children through Teens

Studies recommend **school age children through teens** *should have a 1-2 hours of limited media time* (television or video games). Guiding children toward non-media activities is a sure way to reduce their screen time. The busier they are exploring the real world, the less likely they'll resort to TV shows, video games and the computer for entertainment.

*Any **video games** for children should be **free of violence** and other **adult content**. **Killing** people or animals, high speed races with crashing cars and other such games serve no educational purpose and **can only desensitize** them to violence. **Adults and teens should not play these games in front of children.** *Violent behavior is learned, often early in a child's life.*

Resources:

<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx>

http://www.cmch.tv/mentors_parents/tips_activities.asp

<http://www.babycenter.in/a1019615/how-video-games-affect-toddlers-and-how-to-deal-with-it>

<http://www.pamf.org/parenting-teens/general/media-web/violentgames.html>

<http://www.esrb.org/index-js.jsp>