

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>