

Why TV in Children's Bedrooms is a Very Bad Idea

For many years now, it has been the official advice of the American Academy of Pediatrics not to allow TV in children's bedrooms. This is not to say that all TV shows are bad. Certainly, watching select TV shows by children with their families present can be rewarding, but do try to limit your child's total TV watching time to not much more than 10 hours per week. But TV in the child's bedroom has been proven to be a very bad thing. Many research studies have now shown quite clearly that having a TV in a child's bedroom increases the likelihood of the following:

- ❑ Learning difficulties and school problems
- ❑ Decreased reading skills
- ❑ Decreased creativity and imaginative play
- ❑ Difficulty falling asleep & other sleep disturbances
- ❑ Aggressive behavior
- ❑ Isolation & decreased family bonding
- ❑ Obesity (being overweight) and diabetes

The child's bedroom should be a place to unwind, play quietly, listen to music, or read a book. The two main reasons parents have allowed TVs in their child's bedroom are usually:

- ❑ Because we always wanted a TV in our bedroom when we were kids, and now that we're all grown up, we give our children what we always wanted... But think about that a moment--is that the right thing to do?
- ❑ Because we're tired of arguments about what is to be watched on the TV. But wait.....if you and your child learn to negotiate as a family what's to be watched and when, everybody wins. And your child will learn valuable lessons in the art of negotiating what they want, what's truly important, and what's not.

How to solve this problem:

The TV can't be taken away without a good reason, so some compromise is necessary: This applies even if a relative proudly (but misguidedly) gave the TV as a present to your child. You have three choices:

- ❑ Convert the TV into a video game center. A video game is interactive, and there are at least some benefits to becoming skilled at playing video games provided it is limited to **NO MORE THAN ONE HOUR PER DAY**. But if this video game set-up is in the child's bedroom, make sure there is no cable hook-up, no antenna, and no VCR or DVD that allows them to continue watching TV.
- ❑ Simply take the TV out of your child's bedroom and place it in the kitchen, cellar, garage...anywhere else but in their bedroom. It can then be used by the child or other family members if there are conflicts over what is to be watched, and at least it's no longer in their bedroom.
- ❑ Truly, the best option is to have the child sell his or her TV at a garage sale, pocket the money, and buy whatever else they want (except another TV), like a bicycle, rock concert tickets, or a kick-ass stereo. If a garage sale thing doesn't work, buy the TV from your child yourself. It's the best investment you'll ever make!

Good Luck!