Is Media the Other Parent?
The Influence of Media & Technology on Young Children

NACCRRA
December 7, 2011
Objectives

• Overview of young children’s media landscape

• Research on the media’s impact on children’s health and development

• Tips on raising media-smart kids

• Strategies for educating and engaging parents, caregivers and your community
About Me

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About Me

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Insert picture
1. Rate

2. Educate

3. Advocate
How much time are young people spending with media?
Media use by activity

Among 0-8 year-olds, average time spent in a typical day:

- Watching TV/videos: 1:44
- Reading/ being read to: :29
- Listening to music: :29
- Playing media games: :25
- Other computer activities: :06
- Other apps: :01

Total media time: 3:14

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
Among 0-8 year-olds, average time spent in a typical day using:

- **A TV set**: 1:40
- **A computer**: 0:17
- **A video game player**: 0:14
- **A cell phone, iPod, or iPad**: 0:05

**Total screen media time**: 2:16

**Digital media time**: 0:36

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
In a typical day, amount of time 0-8 year-olds spend with media:

- White: 2:51
- Black: 4:27
- Hispanic: 3:28

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
TV use for 0-2 year-olds

- Average age for first TV viewing is 9 months
- 47% watch TV or DVDs daily. Of those who do watch, the average is nearly 2 hours per day
- Twice as much time is spent watching TV than reading books

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
Among 0-8 year-olds, the percent who live in homes where the TV is on even if no one is watching it:

- 4% Never
- 16% Hardly ever
- 10% All of the time
- 29% Most of the time
- 40% Some of the time

Heavy TV households 39%

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
Media in the bedroom

Among 0-8 year-olds, percent with each item in their bedroom:

- TV: 42%
- DVD/VCR player: 23%
- Video game console player: 11%
- Computer: 4%

Source: Common Sense Media, Zero to Eight, 2011
70% Of kids in **home-based day care** centers watch TV every day

36% Of kids in **center-based day care** centers watch TV every day

1.6 hours Of total TV time for toddlers

10 minutes Of total TV time for toddlers

Media has changed its message

Role Models/
Social Messages

Advertising

Violence
In the home  On the go/mobile
Differentiated → Converged
What does this mean for young kids?
Cognitive Impact

• Young children’s cognitive impact depends on
  • **Content** – age-appropriate, high-quality, educational
  • **Context** – adults being present and engaged with children, reinforcing learning
  • **Age of the child** – learning outcomes start with preschool, not infants

• Exposure to heavy media use, pure entertainment, and violence is associated with poorer cognitive development and lower academic achievement

Source: Children and Media, 2008
“I don’t spend nearly as much time with my son as I need to... He has learned huge amounts from the videos and computer games we have.. I’m very grateful.”

- Mother of a 1 & 3 year old

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation (2003)
Distinguishing reality from fantasy

- Young children can’t tell the difference between fantasy and reality on TV
- Young children are particularly susceptible to media violence
Heavy and repeated exposure to media violence can lead to:

- Desensitization to violence
- Thinking that violence is an acceptable and effective way of solving problems
- Belief that world is a mean and scary place
- Bullying and aggressive behavior
“I watch CSI... She sits down and watches with me. I don’t know how harmful it is to her. It’s gory, but it doesn’t seem to bother her.”

– Mother of a 1 & 3 year old

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation (2006)
Materialistic values

- Kids under 8 have a hard time distinguishing ads from programming
- Ads are becoming more interactive and harder to detect
- Merchandising saturates kids’ worlds with products
• Kids see one food commercial about every five minutes Saturday mornings.

• A preschoolers risk of obesity jumps 6% for every hour of TV watched per day and 31% if there is a TV in their bedroom.
What can parents and childcare providers do to help kids?
Know the child’s media habits

• Where is the media located?

• Who uses media and how often?

• What are the child’s rules?

• What are children’s favorite shows or games?
Make media guidelines and limits

• Limit “screen time” and balance with other activities

Active time

Creative time

Reading time
Make media guidelines and limits

• Encourage parents to keep media out of kids’ bedrooms

• Teach children to ask permission before using media

• Watch the clock
Choose age-appropriate media

• Choose age-appropriate media and when possible educational media

• Reinforce learning concepts from media
  • Vocabulary
  • Numbers/letters
  • Good behavior

• Background vs. Foreground TV
Use media together and ask questions

• Let kids know what you like, don’t like and why.

• Look for media that encourages real world exploration.

• Ask LOTS of questions!
  o Who was your favorite character? Why?
  o Why do you think that character did that?
Help kids understand what they’re watching and playing

- Reassure children that they are safe.
- Superheroes and cartoon characters can do things that real people can’t.
- Talk about better ways to solve problems, having children give examples.
Resources for parents and educators

- Reviews
- Recommendations
- Research
- Parent advice
- Tip sheets
- Videos
- Turn-key parent presentations
Our resources can help

Advice for families in a 24/7 media world

Family Guide to Kids' High-Tech Toys
Learn how to manage your kids' new tech toys and avoid unwanted surprises.

Tips, advice, and solutions

Preschoolers
Should Babies and Toddlers Watch TV?, Why Preschoolers Love Apps and iPhones
In partnership, we can…

Bring parents, caregivers, and educators together to raise a generation of kids who are safe, smart and responsible creators and consumers of media.

www.commonsense.org
Research


Research

