



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## MAY FIT KIDS

### HOMEWORK & NEWSLETTER

#### Tune Out Your TV for Better Health?

American children, on average, watch 3-hours of television a day. Many watch more than that. Sound like a lot? Think about your average day. In the morning, the kids might manage about an hour or more while you shower, make lunches, and dress the baby.

After school, it's hard to argue with a child who just wants to flop in front of the TV for an hour to unwind. Besides, the TV keeps them busy while you cook dinner. Before bed, everyone gathers to watch the baseball game or your favorite sitcom. Three hours comes and goes pretty easily. So, how is TV a problem for health? Watching several hours of TV each day can result in less physical activity, more overeating, and more risk for becoming overweight. Why? Because watching television often means being inactive, snacking during viewing, and getting exposed to lots of advertising for high calorie, low nutrition foods. In fact, new research shows that food advertising is very effective at influencing what children eat, and that exposure to TV advertising is strongly linked to body fatness.

A few quick facts...

- Each day, children receive about 58 commercial messages from television alone. About half of these are for food.
- Close to 98% of food commercials on weekend morning network TV are for unhealthy foods high in fat, sodium, cholesterol or sugar.
- The amount of marketing aimed at kids has more than doubled during the last 10 years from \$7 billion to \$15 billion a year.

What's a parent to do? Protect your children by setting limits. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children over age 2 years watch no more than 2 hours a day of quality programming--and the less, the better. You can make the biggest impact by keeping television sets out of children's bedrooms, and by banning TV during homework and mealtimes. Although you may get complaints at first, these limits can actually help you spend more time interacting as a family, and free up time to do other things like play games, read, or just be together.

Another thing you can do is to help your children make appropriate choices when they do watch television. Whenever possible, watch programs with children to monitor the content, including commercials. You are far better able than they are to see the hidden messages and motivations of commercial advertisements. When it comes to food advertising, children are easily misled by commercials that promote diet foods and fast foods as nutritious choices. And finally, set a good example by keeping your own TV viewing habits in check. For ideas on how to promote TV turnoff in your community, check out [www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org).

You can also find helpful ideas for activities to substitute for TV time by visiting [www.verbnw.com](http://www.verbnw.com) or [www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov).

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Use technology:**  
Screening devices (like TiVo) can remove advertising, and allow you to view TV shows in less time.
- **Be a good role-model:**  
Keep a check on your own TV viewing habits....kids will take their cues from you!
- **Endure kids' complaints:**  
This may be a parent's biggest challenge. But, stick with it!
- **Help kids deal with boredom:**  
Be prepared to suggest other activities. Over time, kids will learn to entertain themselves.

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**FIT KIDS HOMEWORK:** Use the calendar on the back of this newsletter to write down any health and wellness goals you may have. Hint: If you need ideas you can use the tips for success in this newsletter. Work on these during the month of May and keep track of your progress on the sides of the calendar. When the month is over, return the calendar to the staff in Child Watch during the first week of June to receive a prize! It's that easy! Have fun.

## GOAL-SETTING CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	MY PROGRESS:
Name _____								
Week 1 Dates _____ My Goal This Week: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I met my goal! <input type="checkbox"/> I still need to work on this: _____ _____
Week 2 Dates _____ My Goal This Week: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I met my goal! <input type="checkbox"/> I still need to work on this: _____ _____
Week 3 Dates _____ My Goal This Week: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I met my goal! <input type="checkbox"/> I still need to work on this: _____ _____
Week 4 Dates _____ My Goal This Week: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I met my goal! <input type="checkbox"/> I still need to work on this: _____ _____

**REMEMBER TO SET S.N.A.C.K. GOALS:**  
**Small, Needed, Achievable, Can I Count It?, Know-How**