

Too much TV for kids may lead to attention deficit problems

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 der watched at least five hours daily.
 Among 3-year-olds, only 7 percent watched no TV, 44 percent watched one to two hours daily, 27 percent watched three to four hours daily, almost 11 percent watched five to six hours daily, and about 10 percent watched seven or more hours daily.

In a Pediatrics editorial, educational psychologist Jane Healy said the study "is important and long overdue" but needs to be followed up to confirm and better explain the mechanisms that may be involved.

The researchers didn't know what shows the children watched, but Christakis said content likely isn't the culprit. Instead, he said, unrealistically fast-paced visual images typical of most TV programming may alter normal brain development.

The newborn brain devel-

ops very rapidly during the first two to three years of life. It's really being wired" during that time, Christakis said.

"We know from studies of newborn rats that if you expose them to different levels of visual stimuli ... the architecture of the brain looks very different" depending on the amount of stimulation, he said.

Overstimulation during this critical period "can create habits of the mind that are ultimately deleterious," Christakis said. If this theory holds true, the brain changes likely are permanent, but children with attention problems can be taught to compensate, he said.

The researchers considered factors other than TV that might have made some children prone to attention problems, including their home environment and mothers' mental states.

The American Academy of

Pediatrics said in 1999 that children under the age of 2 should not watch television because of concerns it affects early brain growth and the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Jennifer Kotler, assistant director for research at Sesame Workshop, which produces educational children's television programs including "Sesame Street," questioned whether the results in the April Pediatrics would apply to educational programming.

"We do not ignore this research," but more is needed on variables that could affect the impact of early exposure to television, including whether content or watching TV with a parent makes a difference, Kotler said.

"There's a lot of research ... that supports the positive benefits of educational programming," she said.

On the Net:
 Pediatrics: <http://www.pediatrics.org>

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Kids advocate for other children and themselves

Every child wants a home," says 12-year-old Cronetta. "So help the children in the world because everybody needs a parent."

Cronetta and her brother Robert, age 10 are spokespeople for children in foster care who are waiting for adoptive families in Mecklenburg neighborhoods. They know what it feels like to be waiting - they are waiting for parents to adopt them.

"Cronetta is insightful, engaging, and outgoing - she has a strong sense



Cronetta and Robert are two of many children waiting to be adopted in Mecklenburg County.

in the church choir together.

"I love my brother, he's always been part of my life," states Cronetta. "I want to be adopted into the same family with Robert."

If you are interested in finding out more about Cronetta and Robert or other children awaiting adoption, call Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services at 704-336-KIDS (5437).



Communities for Families & Kids
MECKLENBURG COUNTY
 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
 YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

Interracial community that withstood bigoted attacks remains a spiritual haven

By Elliott Minor
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMERICUS, Ga. - Despite bombs, bullets and legal battles, the interracial community Koinonia Partners survived the racially tense 1950s and '60s by remaining true to its founder's desire for nonviolence.

Now the rustic southwest Georgia farm, surrounded by peanut and cotton fields, is a haven for people seeking spiritual growth and more meaningful lives.

"If they had gotten testy, if they had challenged the establishment, if they had gotten violent, they would have been wiped out by the KKK," said spokesman David Castle.

It was out of Koinonia that the worldwide housing ministry, Habitat for Humanity International, was born.

The farm's other spinoffs include the Prison and Jail Project of Americus, which campaigns for equal justice and improved jail conditions, and Jubilee Partners, near Athens, which has helped more than 2,500 refugees. An outreach center at the farm also provides more than a dozen programs, including after-school tutoring, computer training, health fairs and activities for senior citizens.

Clarence Jordan, a farmer, minister and Greek scholar,

founded Koinonia in 1942 to show that blacks and whites could live and work together in the segregated South. It incensed some whites that both races dined together, used the same restrooms and got paid the same wages.

But Jordan remained firm in his convictions, even after opponents fired bullets into homes, blew up the farm's vegetable stand and forced Koinonia to go to court to get three white children who lived on the farm admitted to the all-white high school in nearby Americus. Koinonia's white children were considered "tainted" because of their association with blacks.

At the height of the turmoil, a local grand jury labeled Koinonia a communist group and they were also banned by at least two churches.

Jordan's daughter, Jan Jordan Zehr, said the adults remained outwardly calm through it all and said nothing to frighten the children.

"When they started shooting into houses, the adults stacked cordwood around the back of the house closest to the road," she said. "Mom said, 'I'm going to rearrange the living room.' So all the books got moved to the outside wall, instead of the inside wall. They very calmly told us that if we heard shooting, we should drop to the floor."

'Truth' offers hope for more authentic living

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times physically go through papers and things of the past and release them into the universe so you can move forward. At this time she had left a job was on the verge of starting over. That's when she met some old friends that unearthed her sadness and fear of uncertainty. "As I left them, I also felt extremely sad. What had happened to my strategy? In that moment, I couldn't see even a glimmer of my success," she said. Instead, I saw a vision of the boxes in both spaces that were left to tackle. I saw the multitude of issues that I was still facing in order to set my life on course-to choose my own Truth...As I continued to walk up the street, refocusing on the work at hand, knowing that I had to find a way to do what was on my long list, I had the thought: Let things fall apart.

A few hours after reading that section I received a phone call about a pet project that I loved and that has been in my life for almost two years. The voice on the other end only spoke of uncertainty and how the project would more than likely end. A few months ago or even a day earlier the information would have destroyed my confidence and peace. But since I was still reading "Choosing Truth" I reflected back to the section "Things Fall Apart. Let them." Then I hung up the phone. Took a deep breath and said, "Things fall apart. Let them." And I picked the book back up and continued to read.

One of the greatest things about this book is that Cole doesn't spout a bunch of grandiose theories. She speaks of her life experiences and expresses the importance of self-inquiry to individuals truly seeking the truth.

Throughout the book Cole stresses that truth isn't dependent on religion. In fact one of the most profound statements made in this piece is when she says one can't seek truth without running into God.

I believe this book should be on the shelf of every person that believes that truth must be chosen and followed in order to live an authentic life.

Happy Easter

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