

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Pediatricians suggest limits on TV viewing by children

Watching TV can affect brain growth, physical health

BY ERIC FIDLER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - Children under 2 shouldn't watch television at all, not even "Sesame Street," the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends.

And older children shouldn't be allowed to have televisions or computers in their bedrooms, the 55,000-member academy said in a report in this month's issue of the journal Pediatrics.

The academy said research shows direct interaction with parents and other care-givers is necessary for babies' and toddlers' healthy brain growth and the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Watching television may interfere with that interaction, the report said.

TV viewing also can affect the physical health of young people, the academy said, and pediatricians

should take a "media history" of patients to go along with the traditional medical history.

The medical organization is giving its members a questionnaire for young patients, asking about their time spent on movies, computer games and the Internet. The pediatrician could then counsel parents about areas of concern, the report said.

"The importance is to get the message out to people that TV and media consumption has significant health effects on children," said Dr. Miriam Baron, chairwoman of the academy's committee on public education, who helped write the study. She suggested children be encouraged to play outside, read books or work with puzzles or games.

And while tots under 2 shouldn't be watching TV, she added, "If it's a 3-year-old and 'Sesame

Street' is on and parents want that half-hour of peace, there's nothing wrong with that."

A spokesman for the Public Broadcasting Service, which shows "Sesame Street" in the United States and recently announced a \$40 million investment to create six animated programs for preschoolers, said he didn't believe broadcasters and pediatricians were at odds over the issue.

The broadcaster encourages youngsters to watch TV with their parents, to be selective in their viewing and to seek out other activities - like reading books - that reinforce what they see on television, said spokesman Harry Forbes.

However, the U.S. marketer of the popular show "Teletubbies," which is specifically geared to youngsters under 2, took offense.

The report is "a bunch of malarkey" because it doesn't take into

account how parents raise their children, said marketer Kenn Viselman.

More than 1,000 studies have concluded that exposure to media violence can increase the risk of aggressive behavior in some children and adolescents, the academy said.

The academy also pointed to the high sexual content of television shows, the glamorization of tobacco and alcohol use, and the tendency of people who watch a lot of television to be overweight.

The academy noted that the average American child spends 21 hours a week watching television. It said that demonstrates the need for media education programs in schools that could teach children to look at the messages they get from the media with more critical eyes.

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File Photo
Research shows direct interaction with parents and other care-givers is necessary for babies' and toddlers' healthy brain growth and development of social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Time Warner to help rescue Apollo Theater

BY JUDIE GLAVE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Media and entertainment conglomerate Time Warner Inc. has stepped in to help rescue Harlem's famed Apollo Theater.

The agreement with the Empire State Development Corp., which owns the Apollo, calls for Time Warner to put some \$500,000 into the financially troubled theater, Time Warner spokesman Ed Adler said Thursday.

Under the agreement reached with the state, U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel will step down as chairman but will remain a member of the board that controls the landmark theater, Adler said. Rangel will be replaced by actor Ossie Davis.

The board, which will consider the deal at its meeting Monday, will also be expanded to 19. It will include 10 new people named by Time Warner, many from the entertainment industry, Adler said.

The agreement may also bring an end to a lawsuit filed by former state Attorney General Dennis Vacco last November, accusing six members of the Apollo board of mismanaging the landmark theater.

The theater, which opened in 1914, drew top acts during its 1930s and 1940s heyday, including Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald. It was turned into a movie theater in the 1970s and reopened for live shows in 1983.



"The PJs" uses claymation to depict life in the projects.

'The PJs' wins animation Emmy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - The Fox Television series "The PJs," created by Eddie Murphy, and HBO's "Animated Epics: The Canterbury Tales" won animation Emmys for individual achievement.

Three animation categories are

determined by a panel of judges from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' animation and performers peer groups. The winners were announced Wednesday.

Ja'Net DuBois was honored in the voice-over performance category for her role as Mrs. Avery on "The PJs."

Ashley Potter and Les Mills won the individual achievement in animation award for their work on "Animated Epics: The Canterbury Tales: Leaving London."

Joanna Quinn earned the Emmy for outstanding animator and production for the same series.

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