

Too Much TV for Tots?

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Three-year-old children who are exposed to more TV appear to be at an increased risk for exhibiting aggressive behavior, according to a new report co-authored by a researcher with the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.



Very young children who watch TV may be more prone to aggressiveness, according to a study co-authored by Catherine A. Taylor, assistant professor of community health sciences. (Photo by Melinda Viles)

The report, which appears in the November issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, analyzed survey data from 3,128 mothers in 20 large U.S. cities to examine associations of child television exposure and household television use with aggressive behavior in children.

"The study shows that there is an association between the number of hours that the

television is on at home and early childhood aggression," says co-author [Catherine A. Taylor](#), assistant professor of community health sciences, who conducted the study with lead author Jennifer A. Manganello of University at Albany, State University of New York. "We also found that the number of hours a child directly spends watching TV is associated with increased aggression."

The study found about two-thirds (65 percent) of mothers reported that their 3-year-old children watched more than two hours of television per day. On average, there were an additional 5.2 hours of household TV use per day.

The authors suggested that increased television use in the household could displace more positive childhood development activities and interactions with parents.

Direct child TV exposure and household TV use were both significantly associated with childhood aggression, after accounting for other factors such as parent, family, neighborhood and demographic characteristics.

"One explanation that could link both child and household TV measures with aggression involves the parenting environment," the authors write. Households with higher rates of TV use may have fewer restrictions on children's viewing habits.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen media for children younger than 2, but studies consistently have found TV watching in that age group.