

# Effects of excessive tv watching and children with adhd

[Family](#), [Children](#)



All the stages of human development are deeply affected by the environment provided to an individual. This environment comprises of a sensitive and consistent care, a strong emotional support and suitable learning aids which help in fostering a secure and strong attachment behavior in children.

Such children view themselves positively as loveable figures and others too as trustworthy and emotionally accessible people. On the contrary, abnormally high intrusive, unpredictable or unkind attitude of parents towards a child and inadequate learning opportunities are more likely to push the child to adopt an insecure and confused attachment behavior, leading to development of behavior disorders in a child.

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) is one such common behavior disorder which is marked by the lack of concentration, hyperactivity and impulsiveness in a child. The major cause for the development of this disorder in children is associated with the environment.

Television is a prime source of learning for children and forms the basic component of today's environment. Once the television was introduced, a lot of questions were raised over what effects this might have on children. Today, there are over 1000 research studies which indicate a close link between television and violent, aggressive and anti-social behavior in children.

Television can therefore be regarded as a major causative factor towards development of behavior disorders like ADHD in children. This paper will focus on the same issue, first highlighting the specifics of ADHD and then

broadening the scope to the effects of excessive watching of television on children in order to establish a relation between ADHD and TV.

### What is Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

The past 50 years have named and renamed ADHD as Minimal Brain Dysfunction, Hyperactive Child Syndrome and Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without hyperactivity; the present day term being, ADHD-Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

All these disorders possess common symptoms of impulsiveness, lack of concentration, inattentiveness, impatience and restlessness. ADHD is known to affect approximately 4% of all children, though the wider range of possible sufferers is from 3 to 11% or more (Michelle and Joel 1175-1183).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of American Psychiatric Association, describing the diagnostic criteria for explaining ADHD, has continued to put forth modified categorization of ADHD constituents. Nowadays, at least six out of nine symptoms of each, inattention and hyperactivity, should be present in a victim, to label him/her as suffering from combined type ADHD (DSM IV - APA).

In addition, there must be some impairment from symptoms in two or more settings (e. g. home and school) and clear evidence of significant impairment in social, school or work functioning.

The DSM IV also allows the classification of two subtype disorders: (i) predominantly inattentive where the child only meets criteria for inattention;

and (ii) predominantly hyperactive-impulsive where only the hyperactive-impulsive criteria are met.

ADHD represents a damaging effect which is a common, frequent and expensive child disability involving obvious problems of intense activity, often inappropriate for the child's age.

The principal characteristics linked with ADHD are lack of concentration, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. These symptoms occur in varying amounts of intensity and are noticeable in complex behaviors such as aggression, poor rule-regulated behavior, delay of gratification and pleasure, learning difficulties, meager impulse control, and low motivational and inspirational levels.

Approximately 70 - 80% of children with ADHD reveal persistent problems involving impulsivity, over activity, restlessness and agitation and behavioral, attention, and cognitive difficulties through puberty. Most children and adolescents with ADHD are not likely to outgrow this disorder, but the persistent nature of this disorder is likely to affect their lives when they enter in their adulthoods.

There is a common perception that ADHD is only a child disorder. Latest statistics however reveal that 2-7 % of adult population in US is suffering from ADHD (Barkley 192-202).

Poor environments, insecure parent-child attachment, natal factors, neurobiological aspects and hereditary issues have been observed to be chiefly responsible for the development of ADHD in an individual. Underlying

etiological explanations of ADHD can be simply divided into biological and environmental.

In simple terms, biological explanations include genetics, brain structure and their influence on neuro-psychology, while environmental explanations include wide variety of issues related to a child's psychological development like parent-child relationship, friends, and activities at home and school.

When we analyze the children affected with ADHD, we find that there are significant interpersonal clash and argument in the family, where the child is brought up.

The child is not getting necessary care, and emotional support and therefore he/she starts making role models from the television, movies or elsewhere (Julia and Rosemary 988-1003). The unguided thought process and behavior readjustments lead the child into the world of deviance.

### Effects of Excessive TV Watching

A major part of child's personality is built on ideas perceived through seeing. Children watch many activities in a day (either happening around them or on a television screen) and conceive models of behaviors related to those things and activities. More so, children like to imitate what they see. Small children cannot easily differentiate between real life and fantasy.

Violent images on media may seem real to young children. They can be traumatized by viewing these scenes. Its excessive exposure can desensitize them to reality. Moreover, television programs for children are glamorized

through characters with supernatural powers. Children see these characters as role models and they tend to identify with them.

An in-depth monitoring of the channels revealed that in almost half of the television hours, the programs main focus contains violence. The common themes being used by the programs are crime, shooting, fighting, and murder. A child watching such programs excessively starts adopting the behavior patterns depicted on television (Brown and Hood 140).

Children are always in the process of learning new things. The first 2-5 years of a child's life are very vital in the growth and development of a child's brain. During this time, children need positive interaction with other children and adults. Too much television can negatively affect early brain development.

This is especially true at younger ages, when learning to talk and play with others is so important. According to statistics, before an average American child turns 18, he/she will have seen about 200, 000 acts of violence on television alone.

A recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that eighteen percent of high school students carry a knife, razor, firearm, or other weapons in the school premises.

A Senate Judiciary Committee report on media violence portrays that 73% of Americans believe that television and movies are to be blamed for juvenile crime (Kelly, Kimberly and Daniel 265-281).

A change in behavior and attitude is very obvious in children spending too much time in front of television screens. Not paying heed to elder's instructions, replying in a rude manner, poor education results, and preferring an isolated life are few to name the symptoms of a changing behavior pattern.

By watching violence, children learn that it is okay to use force to handle aggression and settle disagreements.

Media violence dictates children to behave aggressively toward others. They learn to use violence instead of self-control to take care of problems or conflicts. Violence in media may make children more accepting of real-world violence and less caring toward others.

Children who see a lot of violence from movies, TV shows, or video games start seeing the real world as a cruel, and scary place. Television also exposes children to adult behaviors, prematurely. Television programs often depict sexual activity as normal, fun, exciting, and without any risks.

The children usually copy the same to feel more grown up and to get attention and recognition (Maniadaki et al. 188-195).