

American children exposed to high amounts of harmful background TV

April 19 2012

Children from the age of 8 months to 8 years are exposed to nearly 4 hours of background TV per day, according to a top paper to be presented at the International Communication Association's annual conference (Phoenix, AZ, May 24-28).

The study surveyed 1,454 English-speaking households with [children](#) between the ages of 8 months to 8-years-old. Younger children and African-American children were exposed to higher amounts of background TV. Models were included to explore whether [demographic variables](#) including child gender, ethnicity, race, age, and/or family income are associated with different levels of background TV.

Previous research has shown that children with high exposure to background TV have been linked to poor performance in cognitive and reading tasks.

Authors Matthew Lapierre, of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, Jessica Piotrowski, Universiteit van Amsterdam, and Deborah Linebarger, University of Iowa, are the first to provide accurate estimates of background TV exposure to children.

"Considering the accumulating evidence regarding the impact that background television exposure has on young children, we were rather floored about the sheer scale of children's exposure with just under 4 hours of exposure each day," Lapierre said. "Fortunately, our study does

offer specific solutions to reduce exposure in American homes namely- removing televisions from children's bedrooms and remembering to shut the television off."

ICA President-Elect and chief conference planner Cynthia Stohl (Professor of Communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara) added, "As evidence begins to grow that background television exposure has [negative consequences](#) for young children, we need to take notice of the dramatic levels of American children's exposure to background television documented by this international team of [communication researchers](#). This study should be a warning to parents and daycare providers to shut off the television when no one is watching, and certainly to consider the consequences of having a television in a child's bedroom no matter how young they may be."

Provided by International Communication Association

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