

Television In The Bedroom May Hurt Child's School Performance.txt

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A study of elementary school students found that children who had television sets in their bedrooms scored significantly lower on school achievement tests than children without TVs in their bedrooms. Having a computer in the home was associated with higher test scores, according to the same study, which was conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Stanford University. The study is published in the July 4, 2005, edition of the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine.

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"In this study, we found that the household media environment was related to a child's academic achievement," said Dina Borzekowski, EdD, lead author of the study and assistant professor in the Department of Population and Family Health Sciences at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. "Among these third graders, we saw that even when controlling for the parent's education level, the child's gender and the amount of media used per week, those who had bedroom TV sets scored around 8 points lower on math and language arts tests and 7 points lower on reading tests. A home computer showed the opposite relationship—children with access to a home computer had

Television In The Bedroom May Hurt Child's School Performance.txt scores that were around 6 points higher on the math and the language arts test and 4 points higher on the reading test, controlling for the same variables.”

The study followed a diverse group of third-grade students from six schools in northern California. During the course of a school year, nearly 400 students and their parents were asked to report on the types of media available in the home, including television, videotapes, computers and video games, as well as how often the child used them. The children's math, reading and language arts skills were tested twice over the year using the Stanford Achievement Test.

Overall, children who had a television set in the bedroom but did not have a computer at home scored the lowest, while students without TV in the bedroom but with access to a computer at home scored the highest. Students who gained a television in the bedroom over the course of the school year scored lower in all areas than those who had their TV taken away during the same period. The researchers did not find a consistent negative association between test scores and the amount of television watched per week.

“Educators and parents are looking for ways to improve children's standardized test scores. This study suggests that something as logical and straightforward as taking TV sets out of kids' bedrooms, or not putting them there in the first place, may be a solution,” said the co-author of the study, Thomas N. Robinson, MD, MPH, an associate professor of pediatrics and medicine at Stanford University and director of the Center for Healthy Weight at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. “While this study does not prove that bedroom TV sets caused the lower test scores, it adds to accumulating data that kids shouldn't have TVs in their bedrooms. It also suggests that investing in a home computer for a child to use may be an additional strategy to help your child's test scores. The best combination was having both: no TV in the bedroom and also a home computer to use.”

“The Remote, the Mouse, and the No. 2 Pencil” was written by Dina L. G. Borzekowski, EdD, and Thomas N. Robinson, MD, MPH.

The research was supported by grants from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health and a Generalist Physician Faculty Scholars Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Editor's Note: The original news release can be found here.

This story has been adapted from a news release issued by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School Of Public Health.

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