Today’s piece is presented by Horacio Duarte, MD, based on a CNN story “Does your tot really need that tablet all the time?” <http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/04/living/screen-free-week-schools-susan-linn/>

This article encourages parents and their families to participate in Screen-Free Week (May 5-May 11, 2014) and more generally to keep children’s screen time to a minimum, especially for children 2 years old and younger. The author points out that excessive screen time has been associated with several negative outcomes, including obesity, sleep disturbance, poor school performance, and attention issues, and she does a good job of supporting these claims by referring the reader to several relevant, quality peer-reviewed journal articles. This aspect of the article appears to be scientifically balanced and accurate. The author, a psychologist and director of an advocacy organization focused on children and families, shares some of the concerns that parents she works with commonly raise. She acknowledges the “recent explosion” of screen devices and that minimizing screen time can be challenging for parents because of how compelling marketing of screen products as educational tools for young children is. Her position and experience with families likely help the author gain the trust and interest of the audience. The article goes on to say that the more time children spend with screens when they are young, the more time they will spend with them when they are adolescents. She also remarks in her closing line that most people enjoy refraining for 7 days from media exposure, the basis of Screen-Free Week. While these statements may be true, it is unclear whether there are any published studies supporting them.

Readers interested in resources on media exposure may consider the following:

**RESOURCES ON MEDIA EXPOSURE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT/BEHAVIOR:**

American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy statement. Children, adolescents, and the media. Pediatrics. 2013;132:958-961.

Center on Media & Child Health <http://www.cmch.tv/> *Boston Children’s Hospital & Harvard School of Public Health; Explores effects of media on the physical, mental and social health of children*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!