Today’s piece was prepared by Charlene Wong, MD, and is based on an article from CNN.com entitled “TV may improve behavior in kids.” <http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2013/02/18/tv-may-improve-behavior-in-kids/>

The article refers to a UW and Seattle Children’s study entitled “Modifying media content for preschool children: a randomized controlled trial” published February 2013 in *Pediatrics*. As the title of the online article states, the journalist correctly identifies that one of the study’s major findings is that modifying what pre-school age children watch can improve behavior. The study is briefly described as a comparison of around 600 families assigned to either the intervention arm (encouraged to substitute violent shows with education and pro-social ones) or the control arm (viewing habits were not changed). The journalist did not use the authors’ term of “media diet” for the intervention; this term may have made the study intervention easier to grasp for the lay audience. The journalist also stresses reduction in violent television more than addition of pro-social programming in the intervention. The emphasis on the pro-social content is particularly important because of the effort that study case managers dedicated to monthly coaching of parents on pro-social media. Also important to stress in the article would have been that authors made no attempt to decrease the total amount of screen time, especially in light of the abundant media coverage of kids spending too much time in front of the TV.

The journalist identified the main results of the study as children watching less violent shows scored better on tests of cooperation and had fewer incidents of aggressive behavior. The greatest improvement was seen in boys raised in disadvantaged homes where more TV was watched. The study results indicate that it’s not just how much TV children watch but also what they watch that is important. The journalist did a nice job of interpreting the relatively technical results language for the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation (SCBE) in the article to more understandable terms.

Families reading this CNN.com story may benefit from consumer resources consumers regarding responsible television exposure and alternatives. The following resources may help:

**RESOURCES ON RESPONSIBLE MEDIA EXPOSURE AND ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES**:

* **American Academy of Pediatrics Media Recommendations:** <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/default.aspx>
* **PBS Children and Media**: Provides advice on TV & Movies across age groups. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/>
* **Original Article**: [http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/02/13/peds.2012-1493.full.pdf+html](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/02/13/peds.2012-1493.full.pdf%2Bhtml)

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