Today’s piece was prepared by Caroline Jackson, MD based on a CNN story [Parents, stop feeling so guilty about TV time](https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/20/health/screentime-guilt-parenting-strauss/index.html).

This article suggests emphasis on the negatives of “screen time” may be “over the top”. The journalist describes parent guilt regarding how often their children watch TV. The journalist points out that TV can provide an opportunity for rest for parents, bonding for families, and common ground for children that helps them to connect socially. She suggests shows such as Sesame Street can improve cognitive abilities of young children. The author points to other reports that demonstrate children are not actually watching more television now than in the 80s and that for the typically developing child, TV is only dangerous if it replaces physical activity or socializing.

This article makes valid points regarding TV being a topic of conversation in social circles and a source of common memories for families. She also points out negative impacts of inducing guilt in parents and not making adequate space for rest and wellness for caregivers. However, there is sufficient data to suggest that increased TV viewing in young children (especially under the age of 2) can be detrimental to cognitive, language, and motor development (see below), not addressed in this article. The AAP officially recommends children under 18 months avoid screens due to risk of delayed development. The recommendations for children over 2 more closely align with this article’s opinion that screen time should be limited and not replace sleep, physical activity, and other behaviors essential to health. Advocates for children and families must be aware of risks, benefits, and realities of TV being a part of children’s lives, and of pressures parents face from all sides and aid them in making informed decisions that make sense for their families and values.

**RESOURCE FOR PARENTS ON SCREEN TIME:**[Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952) Screen time – How to guide your child

*REFERENCES:*

* *Ling-Yi et al. Effects of television exposure on developmental skills among young children. Infant and Behavior Development. Vol 38. Feb 2015.*

*This study performed by Ling Yi et al examined effects of television exposure on the developmental skills of Taiwanese children under 36 months of age. The study demonstrated that there was a delay in cognitive, language, and motor development for children who spent more time watching television. The study showed significant differences in the incidence of cognitive delay in children who spent 129.3 min watching TV a day vs. 60.7 min of TV. Children with language developmental delay tended to spend more time viewing screens (117.3 min vs. 53.2 min). Children with motor developmental delay also tended to spend more time viewing screens than did those without motor developmental delay (116.9 min vs. 64.4 min). Another study by Dong et al. demonstrated that increased TV time in children was significantly correlated with later bedtime, decreased hours of sleep at night, and increased sleep latency.*

* *Dong S, et al. Multi- center study on the effects of television viewing on sleep quality among children under 4 years of age in China. Zhonghua Er Ke Zhi. Vol 53. Dec 2015.*

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