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NEWS RELEASE

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Stop! Don't Touch That Remote!

With childhood obesity on the rise, many researchers have linked sedentary activities such as television viewing, along with the consumption of high-sugar foods, to the increasing problem. The explosion of baby-aimed videos and television programs has subjected more and more infants and toddlers to television exposure and parents are getting into the habit of using the TV set as a “baby-sitter”.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children under the age of 2 years old should not be exposed to any television at all. According to the AAP, television is a passive activity and infants and toddlers are not developmentally ready to benefit from even the most educational programs. Infants cannot distinguish the content that is being displayed. They are therefore primarily experiencing fragments of light and sound more than anything.

In addition, research has found that exposing a baby's developing brain to videos or television, may over-stimulate it, leading to permanent changes in developing neural pathways. This is known as “rewiring” an infant's brain. Excessive TV viewing has also been linked with irregular bedtimes and naptimes in children 3 years of age or younger.

Infants and toddlers need an environment that interacts with them and is responsive to them. This allows them to grow emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically. It is during this time that their sensory-motor stage of learning takes place. Toddlers need to use all of their five senses to make sense of the environment. They need many opportunities to explore their surroundings through touch, sight, sound, smell and taste. None of these opportunities are explored through TV viewing, even with baby-aimed videos, as there is no interaction taking place.

In recognition of limiting TV for infants and toddlers, as well as all children, the University of California Cooperative Extension celebrates and supports National TV Turnoff Week, April 21st through April 27th with a variety of research-based information and many enjoyable fun activities for the whole family! Please visit <http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu> for all the information on Turning off the TV or call us at (530) 889-7350!

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