

NEWSLETTER

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BABY VIDEOS

Parents, save your money! Despite all the hype and the clever sales pitches, baby videos can cause a DELAY IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.

For every hour a baby spends watching baby videos and DVDs, that baby learns 6 to 8 FEWER new vocabulary words than babies who are not exposed to the videos. The bottom line is that the more baby videos a baby between 8 and 16 months old watches, the fewer words this baby knows. Why is the age of 8 to 16 months so important? This is the age when language skills are beginning to form.

Why would a parent spend hard-earned money on an educational baby video if it RETARDS language development in their child? Because as one Jeremy M. Barker wrote commenting on an article in Seattlest titled, "Baby Einstein Sucks the Vocabulary Out of Your Kid's Brain" some parents who want to have the smartest babies "seem to have undiluted faith in the power of buying things to make that happen when in fact what's best for children is spending time and interacting with them." Amen. Thanks, Jeremy, for saying it so clearly.

Brain research has provided the science that proves what many of us intuitively know. Babies and toddlers do not learn from screens, they learn from interaction with a live person. When a parent reads to a child "shared eye gazing" takes place. When the parent reads and points and says a word on the page there is joint attention to, say, the picture of the ball. And this joint attention is what fosters learning.

Watching a video of a person reading the same story with the same pictures does NOT foster learning.

Another article by the same researchers who described the vocabulary deficit showed that viewing of non-educational or violent TV before age three was associated with later attentional problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics clearly states that no babies under two should watch ANY TV or video no matter what the advertising claims say.

Let's just completely separate the baby and the TV set like we separate the baby and secondhand smoke. TV is an environmental pollutant that has its greatest deleterious effects on the young, developing brain. What do we substitute? A parent, a lap, and a book. Old fashioned for sure, but still the best way to help your baby's brain.

Pay attention, folks. This is important.

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