



Braincandy
Kids' Media Report Card
NewsWorthy Analysis
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1) What Is Your Child's Favorite Way to Pass the Time?

If he or she is like most young children, watching TV or videos must be near the top of the list. Nearly three-quarters of children under 5 watch an hour or more of television each day (73%) and one in five regularly spend three or more hours watching TV (18%). On top of that, more than a third spend an hour or more watching videos, too (34%).

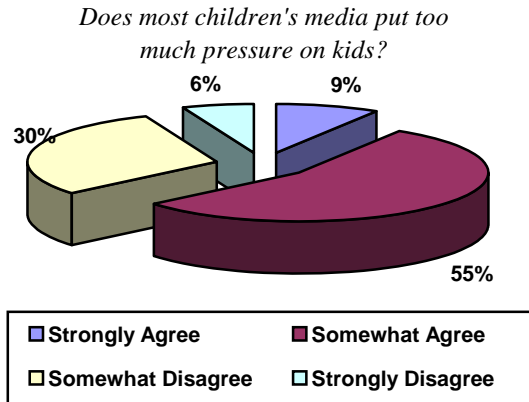
How much time do your kids spend watching TV each day?

	Total	Boys	Girls	Both	Rural	Suburban	Urban
My Kids Don't Watch TV	5%	8%	5%	1%	4%	4%	5%
Less Than 30 Minutes	7%	10%	10%	1%	12%	5%	5%
30 Min – 1 Hr	17%	16%	18%	16%	12%	18%	20%
1-2 Hrs	30%	33%	28%	30%	26%	35%	23%
2-3 Hrs	24%	22%	19%	31%	30%	21%	24%
3-4 Hrs	12%	8%	13%	14%	8%	12%	15%
4+ Hours	6%	5%	7%	7%	9%	5%	8%

- **Big city living.** Children growing up in an urban setting are twice as likely as suburban kids to spend two or more hours watching videos (20% to 10%) each day. Add that to the two hours of TV nearly half of urban children watch (47% compared to 38% in the burbs) and you're talking about a significant chunk of the day.
- **The more the merrier.** Based on a small sample, parents with three or more children under 5 are three times as likely to allow their kids to watch four or more hours of TV a day as parents of a single under-five child (15% to 5%).
- **The battle of the sexes—on pause.** Mixed gender households seem to watch more TV and videos than homes with just boys or just girls. In fact, virtually no parents of both boys and girls said that they watched 30 minutes or less of TV a day (2%). While the majority of families with just boys or just girls at home allow their children to watch fewer than 2 hours of TV a day (65% and 61% respectively), in families with both boys and girls at home the majority of children watch more than two hours of TV a day (52%).

2) Is It Too Much of a Good Thing...Or Not Enough of One?

Quality children’s media helps kids to learn and grow. Unfortunately, not everything on the air meets that standard—something that leaves many parents wary. When asked to “grade” their children’s favorite shows (ranging from extremely satisfactory to extremely unsatisfactory), only one in four (23%) gave the highest rank to their child’s regular programs.



- Under Pressure.** Two-thirds of parents feel that most early education activities, toys, and games overemphasize “right” answers at the expense of creative thinking (64%). Even parents who allow their children to watch 2+ hours of videos or 3+ hours of TV or a day, say more than half the time they are concerned about the pressure educational media puts on kids

(54%). This is also especially true for urban parents. Three out of four believe that most early educational media puts too much pressure on kids (72%). That’s 14% more than parents in a rural setting (58%).

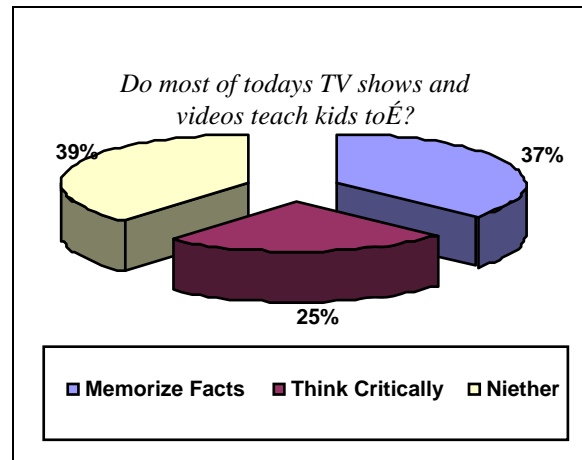
- Vege-ing out or tuning in?** The more parents allow their children to watch TV and videos, the more likely they are to say that their kids are benefiting in some way from the experience. Parents who allow their children to watch 3+ hours of TV a day are 13% more likely to say their kids are engaged by a program than those who watch 30 min or less a day (81% to 94%). Similarly, parents whose children watch a video for less than an hour each day are twice as likely to see their children as passive while viewing the tape than those whose children watch videos for 1-2 hours a day (7% to 14%).
- Canadian club.** Canadians parents are slightly more likely than US parents to see their child as passive while watching a show (20% to 14%). However, regional breakouts show Canadians are twice as likely as parents who reside in the South or Midwest to say their child is mostly passive while watching his or her favorite shows or videos (20% in Canada to 9% in the US South and 9% in the US Midwest).

3) Substitute Teacher or Idiot Box?

We asked parents which skill served them best in their adult lives: the ability to memorize facts or the ability to think critically and analyze a situation. The overwhelming majority said critical thinking skills are the key to success (90%). But only one in four said today’s children-oriented shows and videos taught that analytical skill (25%). Additionally, one in three say kids’ media teaches neither the ability to memorize facts nor any analytical skills (39%).

- **Quicker by the dozen?**

Parents with only one young child at home are more critical of children’s media than those with more than one child under five. Over a third (39%) of parents with only one child under say most TV shows and videos teach neither facts nor critical thinking. However, nearly half of those with 3 or more under-five children at home feel their young ones learn memorization skills from their favorite shows (44%).



- **Say when!** Parents who are most indulgent with TV time also feel it yields the most benefits. Almost two-thirds (57%) of parents whose children watch 3+ hours of TV or videos a day say the shows teach kids how to memorize facts. That’s 26% more than parents whose children watch less than an hour of TV daily (31%)
- **Mars and Venus, reconsidered.** It’s not surprising that two out of three U and Canadian parents say TV and videos to provide educational content for their children (64%). But it is surprising to note the role gender plays in this claim. Parents of boys alone only are more likely to see TV shows and videos as educational than those who have just daughters (70% to 65%). Only half (53%) of parents with children of both genders cite education as a reason to pop in a video or turn on the TV.
- **A mixed bag.** A third of parents with both boys and girls under five at home say TV shows and videos teach children to memorize facts (35%). Interestingly, 42% of those with daughters only say that children’s programming teaches memorization skills—10% more than parents of boys (42% to 32%).



- **Here and there.** Southerners are twice as likely as Midwestern parents to say children’s shows teach critical thinking (33% to 16%). Midwesterners, on the other hand, are 15% more likely to say kids’ shows teach little ones how to memorize facts (43% to 28%).

4) So Why Watch?

With so many reservations about children’s media, why do parents allow their children to watch at all? It’s hard to structure activities for young children each day! Three-quarters of parents say they use videos and TV shows to occupy or entertain their young ones (76%). Basically, parents need the freedom TV shows and videos can offer them. They will allow their kids to watch even if they’re not thrilled about the content—and there is definitely a market for videos that teach a different kind of skill.

- **A moment of one’s own.** Nearly half of all parents depend on TV and videos to free up time for themselves during the day (45%). This becomes even more important to parents with three or more little ones at home—more than half say children’s programs gave them some free time (53%). That’s 10% more than parents with just one child under five to look after (43%). Parents with 3 or more children under five are also more likely to see TV shows or videos as a way to occupy their children (85% to 73%) or provide a central activity when friends come over (12% to 5%) than those with only one young child.
- **The hustle and bustle.** Urban kiddies may watch more TV, but it’s for a reason. Half of all parents in urban areas say TV or videos allow them some time on their own (49% compared to 38% in rural areas). They’re also twice as likely to use shows as a central activity for their children’s friends (10% compared to only 4% of suburban parents).