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**TV, Video Games, and Your Kids**

**By Mark Brandenburg MA,, CPCC**

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There's been a great debate in our country for the last number of years concerning violent TV and video games.

There are thousands of studies indicating that there's a link between violent video images and increased aggressiveness and violence in children.

There are also studies that say there's little relationship between the two, and that there may even be some visual/spatial benefits that kids receive from video games.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the average child in this country will see 200,000 acts of violence by the time they're eighteen.

Common sense tells me this is probably not benefiting them.

But the truth is that it's difficult to prove the exact impact that these images have on kids.

For parents, this may be the wrong question to be asking. Perhaps there are other issues here that would be useful to consider.

As a coach who works with parents, I see the frequent power struggles that come up around video

games and TV watching. When I see young kids in front of a screen, I wonder about all of the other things those kids might be doing.

But it's extremely difficult to be a parent without the "electric babysitter" these days, especially considering how busy parents are today. There is also the added complication of other parents who allow greater access to video games and TV to their kids.

So what do you do about this issue?

How about using your gut instinct and taking a firm stand?

A while back my wife and I decided that when our kids were young we'd like them to spend the large majority of their time interacting with other human beings, not screens. We also realized that at some point in the future this may change. But because of this decision, we're sometimes looked at as peculiar by people we know.

And while it does cause some hardship, we haven't regretted it for a moment.

It simply seemed like the right thing to do.

I would challenge all parents to look at this issue and to make a decision about what kind of family culture you want. And don't base it on what the Jones' are doing across the street or what popular culture tells you to do.

Make your decision, set your limits, and do your kids an enormous service by standing by your limits, no matter what. Firmly and respectfully state that, "this is what we do in our house" and then stand by it.

I don't know if video games and violent TV make kids more violent. And I don't think TV or video games are inherently evil.

I just want the best for my kids, because they'll only be kids once in their life.

Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC, is the author of 25 Secrets of Emotionally Intelligent Fathers ([http://www.markbrandenburg.com/e\\_book.htm#secrets](http://www.markbrandenburg.com/e_book.htm#secrets)). For more great tips and action steps for fathers, sign up for his FREE bi-weekly newsletter, Dads, Don't Fix Your Kids, at <http://www.markbrandenburg.com>

## **Education Software for Kids**

**By Ratliff J**

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We all know our kids love to play video games on the computer. We have also learned that it is hard to stop them from doing something they enjoy. Why not let them play games, but give them education but fun games to play?

Your children can learn and play at the same time. We seem to do this when they are babies and toddlers, then we get out of the habit and only buy them fun stuff that does nothing for the brain. They are tons of educational games available. One of my favorite websites,

sell them

starting at \$4.99. So, if you have kids that enjoy video games, buy them a few educational games and let them learn while having fun.

J. Ratliff is an avid web writer and currently writes articles for dozens of websites.



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