

Experts: Parents 'Clueless' on Dangers of Technology

Experts say parents are “clueless” about the harmful effects too much technology has on their kids. According to pediatricians, parents need to take back control of high tech entertainment.

Many kids spend more time looking at a screen than they do anything else, including school and sleep. Easy access to TV, video games, smartphones or tablets makes this not only possible, but also probable.

For children between the ages of 8 and 18 that adds up to an average of seven hours a day. Even babies are plugged in, with 40 percent under age 2 having used a smartphone or tablet.

So America's pediatricians want parents to crack down. The American Academy of Pediatrics just tightened its guidelines for how much screen time is OK.

Their new rules include the following:

- No screen time at all for kids under 2.
- For older children, two hours a day, tops.
- No technology in a child's bedroom.
- When kids watch TV it should be with parents who can then discuss the content.

Dr. Victor Strasburger with the American Academy of Pediatrics said parents need to use media constructively.

“If you co-view with your kids, that will download your messages rather than what they're getting from the screen,” he said.

Research shows too much screen time can lead to sexual promiscuity, bullying, obesity, poor performance at school and

sleep problems.

Pediatrician Dr. Harvey Karp has written several best-selling books. He suggests turning off all electronics at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

“Light actually goes into your eyes and it turns off melatonin, which is your brain’s normal sleep hormone,” he explained. “So looking at DVDs and television right before bed time actually disturbs a child’s sleep and makes it harder for them to fall asleep.”