

**Children and Tv: a dangerous combination**  
**(this article was written by marhoom Ahmed Shariff Dewji)**

There is a monster in our living room. It teaches our children poor language, bad manners. It corrupts their minds as they watch a man and women in their most private moments. It is the TV which parents trust it to baby sit their children

Writing in the Minaret of Islamic Centre of California Susan Imady MA in a child development and teacher, states that by the time a child is fourteen, he will have witnessed 11000 television murders. Television is accused of brutalizing our children and encouraging apathy and indifference. Our children watch too much TV. Specialists have long recognized family, school and peers as the three socializing factors in our children's lives lately they have added a fourth factor: the media. TV today shapes children's very thoughts and attitudes.

Some of the negative effects television imposes on our children.

1. **Fatigue**

Many children come to school in the morning already tired and remain so throughout the day. It is difficult if not impossible to teach yawning sleepy children. Pedestrians now speak of the "tired- child Syndrome". The symptoms of chronic fatigue, loss of appetite, headache and vomiting in a group excessive TV viewing children were completely alleviated when television was cut out entirely from their daily schedule. It is now believed that close concentration on the television screen over a period of time may result in general fatigue.

2. **The inability to separate what is real from what is not**

Some children become very disturbed by certain movies or cartoons that they view. The fear sometimes lasts for weeks and may result in night mares. Often time's teachers must spend precious classroom hours helping students 'unlearn' what TV has taught them. Children wonder whether Allah is stronger than He-man or if they will be able to fly like Superman. The worst part is that they may react to people as though they were characters on TV that one could turn off, or want to change the channel on or walk away from.

### 3. Passivity

According to Susan, teachers of children in the primary grades report a strong resistance among children not only reading but to exerting any kind of effort. Something requires passive rather than active involvement, and activity not passivity is necessary for children's healthy development. As children watch the screen they soak in images, words and sounds, hour after hour, as if in a dream.

Many parents are convinced of the drawbacks of indiscriminate TV viewing. But their problem is that they feel helpless in stopping their children once the addiction to TV has been established. To them one might ask "Do you allow your child to play with a knife or run into the street? If not, then how do they stop the child? Parents must realize that indiscriminate TV is just as dangerous as letting your child play with a knife. But if you don't let your child play with a knife, why not use the same type of discipline on TV viewing?"

The risks of TV screens over the minds of children may vary from country to country depending upon the time spent and the types of programs. Where TV programs are less, there is the added risk of videos viewed by parents in presence of or along with their children.

The main reason is that parents are addicted to TV and videos and don't feel strongly about its danger. They do not realize the lasting impact and impression over the minds of children of what they see and hear, which would reflect badly in their outlook and behaviour when they grow up. The prophet of Islam had, 1400 years ago, rightly warned of this by saying:

*"The education provided in childhood impresses the child and as such an impact over its mind becomes like an engraving made over a stone."*

As such it is up to parents to establish their true love and concern for their offspring's, it is of paramount importance not to expose them to undesirable and unhealthy TV or video programs.

Parents are duty bound to pay special attention to the right training of their children. The following saying of the prophet provides useful guidance:

*“Accord respect to your children and raise up the standard of their conduct”*

Our children are in trust to us from Allah. We have a paramount duty towards this trust. Let us not fail to discharge.