

TELEVISION/SCREEN TIME AWARENESS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 12, 2006

- WHEREAS,** Research shows that television viewing and screen time have contributed to the dramatic increases in overweight and obesity rates of children during the last two decades; and
- WHEREAS,** National and international organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the World Health Organization have identified the reduction of television viewing as a key area of intervention for prevention of obesity; and
- WHEREAS,** Excessive television viewing correlates with decreased academic performance which is exacerbated for children with televisions in their bedrooms; and
- WHEREAS,** Watching too much television can negatively affect early brain development and may lead to increased aggression; and
- WHEREAS,** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of two watch no television and children over the age of two limit television viewing to no more than two hours per day; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts, work with public health authorities, school health professionals and other organizations to educate parents, youth and community members about the correlation between excessive television viewing and screen time to increased obesity and to poor academic performance of children and youth; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts collaborate and encourage with public health authorities, school health professionals and other organizations to develop and promote research-based goals for television screen time reduction for children and youth; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts encourage parents, guardians, and all others responsible for the welfare of children and youth to develop family and community goals for television and screen time viewing in the home, and healthy alternative activities.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Television (TV) and screen time viewing have been implicated as contributors to childhood obesity. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Television, computer and video games contribute to children’s inactive lifestyles.” TV viewing is associated with pediatric overweight and every additional hour of screen time increases childhood obesity. During the last two decades the prevalence of overweight in children and adolescents has nearly doubled. Long term consequences of obesity include heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, sleep and breathing problems, stroke, depression and some forms of cancer. An adolescent’s average exposure to screen-based media (television, internet, video games, etc.) is approximately four hours a day. Nearly all children live in a home with at least one TV; two-thirds have TV sets in their bedrooms. Youth with television in their bedrooms watch an additional one and one-half hours of television in a typical day.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “Too much television can negatively affect early brain development. This is especially true at younger ages, when learning to talk and play with others is so important.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, “Children watch less TV if they have parents who watch less television themselves, monitor TV closely, are more consistent in TV viewing rules, and know more about the media and media affects.”

With the rapid advances in technology, parents need to continue to monitor the research on the relationship between time spent on visual electronic media and the health and academic development of their children.