

The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids

By Dimitri A. Christakis, Frederick J. Zimmerman

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The nation's top child development experts examine the effects of television on children and their groundbreaking research will startle many

Television is the "elephant in the living room" of our culture. American children watch television an average of 3 hours per day, and many parents sheepishly concede that they rely on television as an electronic babysitter. But TV is not necessarily harmful to kids. The authors present groundbreaking scientific evidence that television can be a powerful and effective tool?for entertainment, for education, and for socialization.

The secret is for parents to learn how to use television as a tool, not a crutch. With a detailed explanation of the effects of television viewing on kids' emotional, mental, and physical development, plus tips to enable parents to act on this new knowledge, they'll soon be able to turn TV into a positive force in their child's life. The authors share:

• which popular shows increase your child's reading ability?and which may delay speech development

• which televised sports boost girls' self-image?and which ones could cause eating disorders

• the best and worst programming for every age, from toddler to teen

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Editorial Review

Review

“Reading *The Elephant in the Living Room*is like having two smart, sensitive, reasonable experts in *your* living room as you think about the role of TV in your kids’ lives. This is the only book you’ll need to help you parent through the ever-growing maze of television options.” **-- Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls***

“This book is an excellent guide for parents who want to understand the effects of TV and DVD viewing on their children. I highly recommend it.” **- Alvin F. Poussaint, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School and Judge Baker Children’s Center, Boston MA“In an ever expanding television universe we think we understand what television is, but do we know what is does? Drs Christakis and Zimmerman illuminate the contentious issue of how television’s messages can be a potentially positive or significantly negative influence in your child’s life. How television makes that happen and what parents can do are cleared described. This is a must read for any parent, grandparent or other caregiver raising a media-exposed and often exploited child.” -- Donald Shifrin, MD, FAAP, Chairman of Committee on Communications, American Academy of Pediatrics**

“This is the book about television that thoughtful parents have been waiting for. Instead of arguing with your friends and neighbors about how much children should or should not watch television---everyone one has an opinion on that subject!---read this book. It is all in here. When you have finished *The Elephant in the Living Room*you will make wiser decisions for your child. You will know what you need to know about the impact of television on violent behavior, sexual behavior, the spending habits of children, and obesity. Drs. Christakis and Zimmerman have done a superb job of synthesizing and explaining what scientists know about the impact of television on children in this fascinating, readable book.”
- Michael Thompson, PhD, co-author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*

“Television has a huge impact on every child and family in this country. This should be required reading for every parent and teacher who’s concerned about the topic.” **- James P. Steyer, founder and CEO, Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org)**

“Christakis and Zimmerman have an important message for all parents. They have produced a book that

balances science and good sense and spiced it with humor and wisdom. Today's concerned parents want to tame the elephant in the living room. The authors deliver sound advice born from years of scientific research and from their own experience as parents. This is a book that will make a difference to parents, policymakers, and child educators. Finally, a book that can help today's overwhelmed parents cut through the hype. It is the best book about television and children on the market." **- Andrew N. Meltzoff, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, and co-author, *The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us about the Mind***

"This is an important book which will help parents understand and redefine the role of television in their children's lives. Christakis and Zimmerman have done a masterful job of making their research accessible to those who want the best for their children." **- Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Director, Center on Media and Child Health, Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School**

"This wonderful, highly readable book translates the very latest scientific research on a wide array of important issues into easily understandable terms. It clearly explains the effects of TV on kids, and provides well-designed techniques for parents to promote their children's healthy psychological development. Anyone who cares about kids should read *The Elephant in the Living Room*." **- Joanne Cantor, Professor Emerita, Director, Center for Communication Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison, author of *Mommy, I'm Scared* and *Teddy's TV Troubles.***

"This is a skillful summary of current research on the effects of television on children and adolescents. It should be a must-read for all parents, whether expecting or in the middle of coping with the electronic world in which their children are living. Rather than simply bashing television for all the harm it can do, the book rightly assumes that the more important question now is how to make television work for us rather than against us? Blending anecdote with scientific studies in a highly readable way, the authors make a compelling case that parents can help their children be more "mindful viewers" so the good effects will outweigh the bad. We've needed a book like this. I look forward to recommending it to the many parents I talk with who are concerned about the increasingly powerful role of television and other media in their children's lives." **- Jane D. Brown, Ph.D., James L. Knight Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill**

*"A must for every parent's library. In an easy, conversational manner, packed with solid information and good advice, Christakis and Zimmerman help us understand the urgent need to take control of TV's impact on our children and ourselves--and they provide us with the tools to do it." -**Susan Linn, Ed.D., Associate Director of the Media Center of Judge Baker Children's Center and Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School***

*"Drs. Christakis and Zimmerman's The Elephant in the Living Room*is easy to read and contains information that every parent and grandparent must have, but doesn't. As parents, we cannot make intelligent decisions

about our children’s physical and mental wellbeing unless we have the facts -- and finally, here they are! I have been waiting for this book for a long time.” **- Robert Kesten, Executive Director, TV-Turnoff Network**

“Television has a huge impact on every child and family in this country. This should be required reading for every parent and teacher who’s concerned about the topic.” **-- James P. Steyer, founder and CEO, Common Sense Media**

About the Author

DIMITRI A. CHRISTAKIS, MD, MPH, is a pediatrician, epidemiologist, and associate professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine. The author of more than 80 research publications and one pediatric textbook, he teaches pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Seattle.

FREDERICK J. ZIMMERMAN, PhD, is an economist, child development expert, and assistant professor at the University of Washington School of Public Health. He has authored more than 30 articles on issues relating to the well-being of children. Together, Dr. Christakis and Dr. Zimmerman codirect UW's Child Health Institute.

Users Review

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Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book could be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the guide untitled The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids can be fine book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Frances Pierce:

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