

## LEARNING AIDES

## TV Gets High Ratings

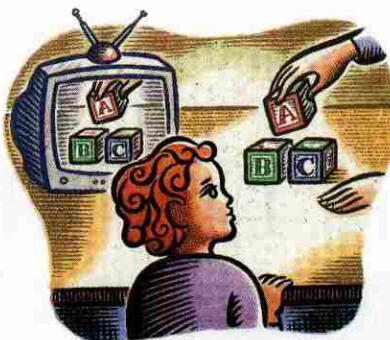
Most people fret when they hear the statistics: On average, toddlers watch television for more than three hours every day. They can't seem to resist bright-colored space aliens and dinosaurs with lulling voices. But my colleagues and I have discovered that it may not be as bad as it seems.

Done right, TV-watching provides more than just lessons on being a couch potato.

In our recent study, 12-, 15- and 18-month-olds watched a video of an adult removing a mitten from a pink fuzzy hand

puppet, shaking it to ring a bell inside and then putting it back on. A second group of babies watched a live adult perform the same actions. The next day, we gave each of them the puppet to see if they could copy the adults' actions.

While the children were able to imitate the live sequence of actions immediately, only the older babies were able to retain and perform what they had seen on the set. This indicates that babies' ability to imitate from



TV lags behind their ability to imitate a live person. The reason is simple. When watching TV, children must first process the information they see

and then make a major leap: Connect what they saw in the 2' x 2' box with real life.

But compared to the one-minute video we used during the experiment, kids watch the same show over and over again—allowing plenty of time for learning. Moral of the story: Babies are picking up more than we think, so choose your TV programs wisely. —Rachel Barr, Ph.D.

## SELF-HELP

## Mental Health Alternatives

Psychology and psychiatry aren't the only fields that try to keep us functioning and fulfilled. At least four alternative fields are in the game, all gaining recognition and support

as millions seek to learn all the options in their search for help. The federal government's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine is funding efforts to see what works and what doesn't. In the meantime, here's a thumbnail look at major alternatives. —Robin Lauzon

	AYURVEDA	TRADITIONAL ORIENTAL MEDICINE	HOMEOPATHY	NATUROPATHY	MAINSTREAM WESTERN METHODS
<b>History and Philosophy</b>	Ayurveda, meaning "The Science of Life" in Sanskrit, finds its roots in ancient Indian Vedic culture. Mental health consists of a balance between the three "life forces": movement, digestion and structure.	Acupuncture first appeared in print in the <i>Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine</i> in 200 B.C.—the "bible" of Oriental Medicine. Views body as a system of energy: When this energy, or "qi," is blocked or weakened, illness arises.	Founded in the early 19th century by a German physician, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann. Philosophy: "like cures like"—medicine is tailored to elicit the symptoms of illness in order to help build up the immune system.	"Naturopathy"—coined in the U.S. only 100 years ago—has its roots in ancient cultures and medicine. It integrates botanical and oriental medicine, nutrition, homeopathy and acupuncture with Western procedures.	In 1792 French physician Philippe Pinel cast off the chains from insane patients, saying behavior problems were "illnesses," requiring talk and medication to cure.
<b>Treatment</b>	Focuses on rebalance using psychology (mind-body), diet, sleep patterns, lifestyle and herbs to treat the whole person.	Acupuncture is combined with herbs, exercise (Tai Chi or Qi Gong), moxibustion or acupressure to maintain mental health.	Practitioners choose from 2,000 over-the-counter low-dosage medications derived from plants, animals and minerals.	When treating mental illness, focuses on the whole person using diet, herbs, vitamins and often acupuncture.	Diagnoses and treats the symptoms and causes using a combination of psychotherapy and/or medication.
<b>Requirements and Regulations</b>	Not yet licensed or regulated by state or federal agencies.	Master's of Traditional Oriental Medicine. Twenty-seven states require license; state boards set standards.	Certification after completion of a three- to four-year program. Not yet licensed or regulated by state or federal agencies	Only 11 states currently license naturopathic physicians. Many other states are considering legislation.	All 50 states license psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors, and 42 license family therapists.
<b>Cost of Year of Treatment</b>	About \$1,000	About \$100 per visit; insurance may cover	About \$1,100	About \$1,000	\$50-\$150 per visit; insurance may cover
<b>Learn More</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.holisticonline.com">www.holisticonline.com</a></li> <li>• <i>The Ayurveda Encyclopedia: Natural Secrets to Healing, Prevention and Longevity</i>, Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (Ayurveda Holistic Center Press, 1998)</li> <li>• California College of Ayurveda, (530) 274-9100</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.acupuncture.com">www.acupuncture.com</a></li> <li>• The American Association of Oriental Medicine's <i>Guide to Chinese Herbal Medicine</i>, David Molony (Berkeley, 1998)</li> <li>• Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, (212) 982-3456</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.homeopathic.com">www.homeopathic.com</a></li> <li>• <i>10 Natural Remedies That Can Save Your Life</i>, James F. Balch (Doubleday, 1999)</li> <li>• New England School of Homeopathy (413) 256-5949</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.naturalhealth.org">www.naturalhealth.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Naturopathy: Understanding the Healing Power of Nature</i>, Stewart Mitchell (Bement, 1998)</li> <li>• Bastyr University, (425) 823-1300</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Psychological Association: <a href="http://www.apa.org">www.apa.org</a></li> <li>• American Psychiatric Association: <a href="http://www.psych.org">www.psych.org</a></li> <li>• The Surgeon General's Report On Mental Health</li> <li>• All major universities nationwide</li> </ul>