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Impacts of television watching on the young child's developing brain: The February 2013 edition of Outreach is exclusively devoted to the impact of television on the young child's linguistic, intellectual and social development.

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Qormooyinka Caddadka

Saamaynta daawashada teleefishinku ku leedahay maskaxda koraysa ee ilmaha yar:

Caddadka Febraayo ee Outraach wuxuu si gaar ah u eegayaa saamaynta teleefishinku ku leeyahay korriinka afka, maskaxda iyo bulshada ee ilmaha yar.

Warbixinta waxaa qortay Sirad A. Farah

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Impacts of television watching on the young child's developing brain

By: *Sirad A. Farah*
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Columbus, OH- Picture this. You are a busy mother trying to keep an eye on your young children, while trying to get dinner ready. What to do? The truth is some would turn the TV on, in hopes of occupying the kids for a short while. In many Somali households here in Ohio, the TV has been given the troubling nickname of 'babysitter', because of its ability to occupy children for hours on end. Children's programming in the US has become a huge industry spawning TV shows, toys, books, DVDs and countless other things. DVDs like the Baby Einstein series imply that your youngsters will turn into geniuses, if only you purchase their products. Television sets are not a recent phenomenon, as they have been a staple of American living rooms for decades. What is different now is with parents busier than ever, children are being exposed to television sets earlier than ever. In non-English speaking households, it's seen as a godsend as the child is occupied and can learn English at the same time.

But what are some of the consequences of exposing our children to televisions from such a young age?

Let me briefly go off topic by discussing language development in early childhood. Birth to three years of age is a hugely critical time for a child's language and social development. Children in most cultures develop language through interaction with parents, relatives, peers and/or adults. For most children, this starts with a mother's stories, rhymes, lullabies to her young child. The child takes everything in passively, interacting with his/her mother non-verbally through a smile, a touch or other ways. Furthermore, through play and interaction with others, a child develops important pre-linguistic skills including turn-taking, motor imitation (i.e. imitating actions), sound imitation, eye contact and joint attention (shared enjoyment between a parent and child, when the child is playing) all which are important for a child's language development. By the time the child starts to utter his/her first word, he/she is equipped with a rich vocabulary. Through interactions with his/her environment, the child's language develops.

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So from a language development perspective, what harm is incurred by exposing a child to the television? The answer depends on how long the child watches TV. For the young child, who has not yet developed language, prolonged television exposure can have negative consequences on the development of important pre-linguistic skills mentioned earlier.

While limited research has been conducted, as a Speech Language Therapist I have worked with several Somali families with non-verbal children; the commonality between these families, is that the children typically watch several hours of television per day. At the very least, this will delay those all-important pre-linguistic skills. And without pre-linguistic skills, a child will simply not develop language.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of two should not be exposed to television and to limit TV for older children. Instead parents can replace television with activities proven beneficial for language development, including reading, and play.

We have touched on the potential impact of TV watching on a child's language development, now what about a child's cognitive development?

In contrast to language development, studies have been carried out on the impact of TV on a child's thinking. The results have been worrying.

The most comprehensive study assessed 1278 children aged 1 and 1345 children aged 3 (remember this is within the critical period for language development).

The study found that TV watching "rewires" a child's brain, leading to attentional issues by the age of 7 (Christakis, Zimmerman, DiGiuseppe, & McCarty, 2004). Dimitri Christakis, one of the researchers on the study, also added that the "pace of TV is sped up" leading the young infant to believe that the "quick scene shifts of video images" is normal (Lotus, 2004).

He adds that TV watching may over stimulate the child's brain, "causing permanent changes to developing neural pathways" (Lotus, 2004). As the child is staring at the TV, these hugely important neural pathways are not being developed.

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In my own practice, I have witnessed Somali children who need who require that constant stimulation, and when things 'slow down' in real life, children can become quite hyper active, and have difficulties attending to people and activities.

Recommendations:

As parents and family members of young children, there is so much that you can do for your child's language development!

Here are some ways to support the healthy development of a child's language, social and cognitive skills. All three of these areas are key in ensuring that your children will be ready for school, once the time comes:

- Playing with children is key during this critical period! If you have the time, play with your children when you can. If you have older children in the home, encourage that they spend time playing and talking with the child. And don't feel the need to go out and buy expensive toys. Work with what you have in your home- almost anything in the house can serve as a toy, even pots.

-Talk with your kids! Talk about the things in your home (i.e. hooyo, this is a ball) and talk about the things you are doing (i.e. hooyo, I'm making salad. Look, there's tomatoes, and carrots.).Even if a child is not talking, but smiling or pointing to something they may want, let them know that you are aware that they are trying to communicate with you. For example, if a child is pointing to the fridge, you can say 'hooyo, I see you pointing to the fridge. Are you hungry?'

-Reading to your children is important, as this will prepare them for learning to read and write effectively, once they begin school. Some in our community may not know how to read in English, but don't let that stop you. I often advise parents who are not cannot read in English, to instead create stories from the pictures they see in the books. This will help your child tremendously. There are also many books which are written in Somali and English, for parents who are only able to read in Somali.

- Using the television in moderation is OK; existing research cautions against hours of television for young children. Engage in activities with children, which are proven in developing language and cognitive skills, including playing with toys, and reading. Research shows that children learn one on one from people, than from video and television.

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-In many of our households, it is a reality that often times there will be one mother, with several children. In this case, rather than distract the children with the television, mothers can train older children to occupy the younger children, with games, toys, reading and general play.

In my work with Somali families, most of my time is spent training older siblings to help their younger children, and alhamdulillah older children are always excited about being a 'teacher' for a younger child.

As mentioned earlier, there is a limited amount of research in this area. Additional research is required on the short term and long term impacts of television on children's language and cognitive development.

This brief paper was informed by existing studies and my own professional experiences. If you have any questions about children's speech and language development, please write me at the email address below.

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Saamaynta daawashada teleefishinku ku leedahay maskaxda koraysa ee ilmaha yar

By: *Sirad A. Farah*

Speech Language Pathologist

Columbus, OH- Bal sawiro. Waxaad tahay hooyo mashquulsan oo dhinacna carruurta il ku ilaalinaysa, dhanka kalena casho diyaarinaysa. Maxaad yeeli lahayd? Runtu waa in qaarkeen ay daari lahaayeen teleefishinka si loo sii jeediyo carruurta muddo gaaban.

Qoysas badan oo Soomaaliyeed oo reer Ohio ah, waxaa teleefishinka loo bixiyay magaca xun ee “dhallaan dhowre,” iyadoo ay ugu wacan tahay awooddiisa uu carruurta ku sii jeedin karo saacado is xiga. Barnaamijyada carruurta ee Maraykanku waxay noqdeen ganacsi weyn oo kulmisa barnaamijyo teleefishin, boombalayaal, buugag, DVD-yo, iyo waxyaabo kale oo aan xisaab lahayn.

DVD-yada sida taxanaha Baby Einstein waxay iska dhigaan in dhallaankaagu noqon doonaan mutacallimiin haddii aad iibsato qalabkooda. Teleefishinnadu ma ahan wax cusub, maaddaama ay yiilleen qolalka fadhiga ee Maraykanka tobanaan sano. Waxa is baddelay iminka waa waalidiintii oo ka mashquul badan sidii hore, carruurta waxaa la tusaa teleefishinka iyagoo ka yar intii hore. Guryaha aan Ingiriiska looga hadlin, waxaa loo arkaa gallad Alle in ilmuhu mashquulo isla markaana uu Ingiriiska barto.

Hase yeeshee waa maxay qaar ka mid ah natiijooyinka in ilmaha la daawisiiyo teleefishinka iyagoo sidaas u da' yar?

Bal aan ka yara baxo mawduuca oo aan ka hadlo af barashada xilliga carruurnimada hore. Dhalashada illaa saddex jirku waa xilli aad muhiim ugu ah korriinta bulsho iyo afbarashada ilmaha. Carruurta dhaqamada kala duwani waxay ku af bartaan la macaamilka waalidkood, ehelkood, kuwa laala'eg, iyo ama/dadka waaweyn.

Carruurta badanaa, waxay uga bilaabataa sheekooyinka hooyada, hadaaqa iyo hees carruureedka dhallaankeeda. Ilmuhu wax walba wuu weeleeyaa isagoon soo celinayn isagoo hooyadiis kula macaamila hab aan hadal ahayn sida dhoollo caddayn, taabasho, iyo siyaabo kale. Waxaa intaa dheer, ciyaarta iyo la macaamilka dadka kale ilmuhu wuxuu ku bartaa xirfado luqadda aasaasi u ah sida tilmaan raaca, ka daba samaynta dhaqdhaqaaqa (sida ficil kaga dayasho), dhaadhaajinta codka, eegista indhaha, iyo wada daawashada (in waalidka iyo ilmuhu isla madadaashaan marka ilmuhu ciyaarayo) kuwaasoo dhammaantood muhiim u ah af barashada ilmaha.

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Markuu ilmuhu ku hadaaqo eraygiisa u horreeya, wuxuu ku qalabaysan yahay erayo hodan ah. La macaamilka bii'adiisa ayay ku kortaa luqadda ilmuhu.

Marka, marka laga eego dhanka af barashada, maxaa dhib ah oo gaaraya ilmaha la daawisiiyo teleefishinka? Jawaabtu waxay ku xiran tahay muddo intee la'eg ayuu ilmuhu daawadaa teleefishinka. Ilmaha yar ee aan weli afka baran, in teleefishin muddo dheer la daawisiiyaa waxay yeelan kartaa cawaaqib xunxun barashada xirfadaha luqadda ka horreeya ee aan soo sheegnay. Iyadoo cilmi barista la sameeyayi kooban tahay, aniga oo ah mucaaliy cudurrada hadalka iyo luqadda, waxaan la shaqeeyay xayn qoysas Soomaaliyeed ah oo leh carruur aan hadlayn; waxa ay qoysaskaasi wadaageenna waxay tahay in ay carruurta dhowr saacadood oo teleefishin ah daawadaan maalintiiba. Ugu yaraan, tani waxay daahinaysaa xirfadihii afku u baahnaa. Iyadoo xirfadaha af barashadu maqanyihiinna, ilmuhu maba baranayo afka. Machadha Maraykanka ee Dhallaanka (American Academy of Pediatrics) wuxuu ku talinayaa in carruurta ka yar labo jir ayan ahayn in la tuso teleefishinka iyo in carruurta ka weyn intaa la xaddido teleefishinka ay daawadaan.

Taas baddalkeed, waalidku waa inay teleefishinka ku baddalaan hawlo la hubo in ay faa'iido u leeyihiin af barashada, sida akhriska iyo ciyaarta. Waxaan wax ka taabannay saamaynta ay ku yeelan karto daawashada teleefishinku af barashada ilmaha, haddaba waa sidee garashada barbaarinteeda?

Marka laga soo tago af barashada, cilmi baaris lagu sameeyay saamaynta uu teleefishinku ku leeyahay fikirka carruurta. Natiijadu welwel bay leedahay. Cilmi barista ugu ballaaran waxaa la baaray 1278 carruur ah oo 1 sano jira iyo 1345 carruur ah oo 3 jira (xusuusnow in xilligan uu muhiim u yahay af barashada).

Cilmi barista waxaa ka soo baxay in daawashada teleefishinku “dib u xirxiro” maskaxda ilmaha, taasoo horseedaysa mushkilado dhanka ihtimaamka ah markay gaaraan 7 jir (Christakis, Zimmerman, DiGiuseppe, & McCarty, 2004). Dimitri Christakis, mid ka mid ah cilmi baareyaasha warbixinta, ayaa wuxuu ku sii daray in “xawaaraha teleefishinku dheereeyo” taasoo keenta in ilmaha yari aammino in “is gedgeddiska muuqaallada fiidiyowgu” ay caadi tahay (Lotus, 2004).

Wuxuu ku darayaa in daawashada teleefishinku ay aad u kiciso dareenka maskaxda ilmaha, “taasoo keenta isbaddello rasmi ah korriinka marinnada neerfayaasha” (Lotus, 2004). Marka ilmuhu teleefishinka ku dhaygagsan yahay, marinnadan neerfayaasha ee muhiimka ahi ma korayaan. Anigan shaqadayda, waxaan ku arkay carruur Soomaaliyeed oo u baahan kicintaas joogtada ah, oo markii yara gaabis ay nolosha caadiga ah ku noqdaan, carruurta ay noqonayaan kuwo kacdoonsan, oo ay ku adagtahay inay ihtimaam siiyaan dadka iyo hawlaha.

*****Dhammaad*****

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