

RAISING A LOW MEDIA CHILD

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Kids absorb everything parents do. Therefore if your life revolves around TV or screens its almost certain that the little one also, being raised in a high media environment will take to it like a fish in water.

My challenge is certainly not TV, as I haven't watched regular TV in 7 years (except maybe the Wimbledon and some sporting events). But since I lived on my laptop pre baby, it's hard to let go of that. My writing has reduced as N stays awake a lot more than before. I rather not spend time on the laptop or iPad when he is around (which is most of the time).

In spite of the minimal exposure to TV – say about 20 minutes of TV every 3 or 4 days – he still points to the TV asking for it to be switched on the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. I do have some iPad apps, which I've downloaded just for him, which I show him once in awhile. Therefore as soon as he sees me on the iPad he makes a beeline and settles on my lap hoping he will get to watch the good stuff and then gets upset when I put it away.

I've heard stories from other parents where their 14, 15, 16, month old can manipulate the iPad or the iPhone with ease. Luckily my 15 month old cannot and is pretty clueless around technology and I plan to keep it that way for as long as I can.

Here's how I plan to do it:

- 1) **Little or no adult TV watching around the toddler.** My husband and I watch a movie once in awhile in the night once the little one is tucked in. Other than that my husband puts on the TV on Sundays and watches some news or cricket but that's about it.
- 2) **No screens as distraction:** We don't encourage iPad or TV while eating as a distraction. IF he does need some distraction at times, I will tell stories, make funny faces, sing, and dance. But not TV. Apart from meal times, I don't even use TV as a distraction just to get him out of my way. When I put on a nursery rhymes DVD for instance we watch it together, I sing to him and point out things therefore making it an interactive experience.
- 3) **No toys with batteries.** N has almost no toys that do things with a push of a button. I firmly believe the more active the toy the less active the child and vice versa. Therefore his toys are the kind that he has to manipulate in order to make them work. The exception being a train that goes around a track.
- 4) **Books are cool:** Books for me are what television is for many. So I use up all my spare time reading. When N wakes from his nap and catches me enjoying a book, he thinks they are the coolest. We have a favourite corner where we read for almost 40 minutes every afternoon and he fetches his favourites these days.
- 5) **Spending time outdoors:** The other day somebody said to my husband – your son is always downstairs. I suppose I'm guilty as charged. Since we live on the first floor he goes down very often

with my help just to kick around a ball and burn up some of that toddler energy. He is tired and active and cannot spend much time in one place even if I do want to put on a DVD for him once in awhile.

I do understand that if you're a fan of television its unfair for you or others in your household to give up for the sake of children. But until the child learns that this is mom and dads tv watching time, and I should play in my room, I do believe that you lose some to win some. In this case the win is creating good habits at a young age and ensuring that you're not going to let your child grow into an inactive couch potato.

Thanks for reading. I'd love to hear what steps other parents have taken to make sure that you have a child who is not drawn towards multimedia at an excessively young age!

[Image source](#)

