

### Two or More Hours of

**Television:** Respondents reporting that the randomly-selected child (aged 1 to 17 years) in their household watched two or more hours of television the previous day.

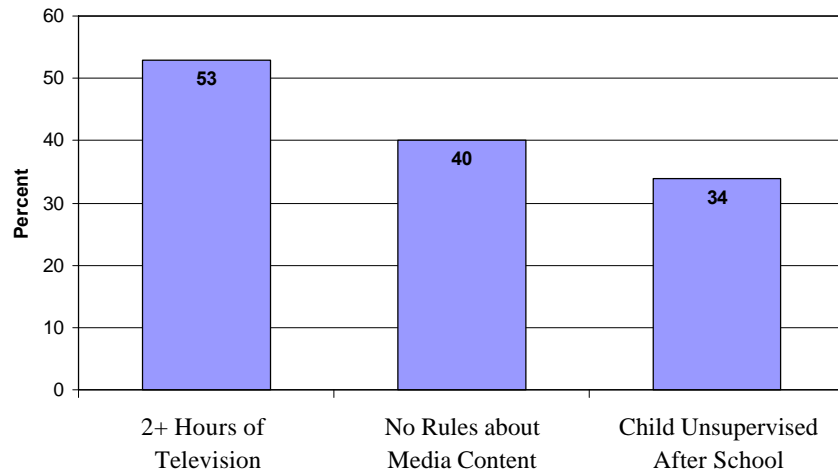
### No Rules about Media

**Content:** Respondents reporting no rules about program/movie content, no rules about video game content, or no rules about Internet use for the randomly-selected child (aged 5 to 17 years) in their household.

### Child Unsupervised After

**School:** Respondents reporting that the randomly-selected child (aged 5 to 17 years currently in school) was unsupervised after school one or more days during the past week.

**Parenting Risk Factors**



## PARENTING

### Background

*Family environment, beliefs, and behaviors can impact the acquisition of behaviors by children that promote or fail to promote health and well-being.*

Raising children to be self-regulating individuals of emotional, mental, and physical maturity is clearly one of the most important functions of the family. While models of family interaction exist that identify some of the factors that shape the development of children, much is not understood. Patterns of belief (values, attitudes, expectations), social environment (communication, organization, roles, rules) and behavior (modeling, positive and negative reinforcement, consistency) in families have all been shown to impact the acquisition of behaviors by children that promote or fail to promote health and well being.<sup>1</sup> Factors that have been consistently found to negatively impact the healthy maturation of children include lack of clear expectations, excessively rigid or excessively lenient behavioral boundaries, harsh or inconsistent punishment, high levels of conflict between family members, positive parental attitudes toward harmful behaviors (e.g., drug use), low emotional cohesion between family members, poor communication, and parents who are not mutually supportive.<sup>1,2</sup>

Other survey data collected from children (Kansas Communities that Care) can provide county level data for many of these factors as perceived and reported by children. The parenting module in this survey provides measures of risk factors and behaviors (e.g., time spent with children, communication, supervision, exposure to media, family structure) reported by a parent or guardian.

How much television is too much? Is it acceptable for some children to be unsupervised after school? How much time should parents spend talking to their children? These data do not attempt to answer these questions but rather to identify the prevalence of behaviors which may place children at heightened risk.

**Risk factors:**

- Two or more hours of television on previous day
- Media content exposure: No rules about program/movie or video game content or Internet use
- Child unsupervised after school one or more days of past week

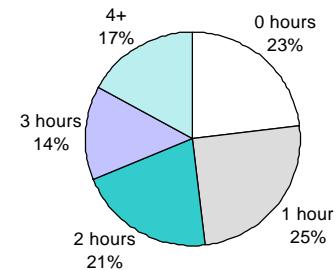
The number of children at risk was sufficient for detailed analysis of three risk factors: (1) “Two or more hours of television”, defined as *watching two or more hours of television the previous day*, identifies a subgroup of children who may be at risk for limited physical activity, limited social interaction, or excessive exposure to media content from television viewing, (2) “Media content exposure” defined as *no rules about program/movie content, no rules about video game content, or no rules about Internet use* identifies a sub-group of children who may be at increased risk of exposure to media violence or sexuality, and (3) “Child unsupervised after school one or more days of past week” identifies children who may be at risk for inadequate supervision.

For the parenting survey module, respondents were asked if there were any children in the household age 17 years or younger. If so, one child in the household was randomly selected for these questions. Questions were only asked if the respondent was the parent or guardian of the selected child.

**Hours of Television**

Seventy-seven percent of the selected children aged 0 to 17 years were reported to have watched at least one hour of television the day prior to the interview. A majority watched two or more hours, and 17% watched four or more hours.

About how many hours did the selected child watch television yesterday?

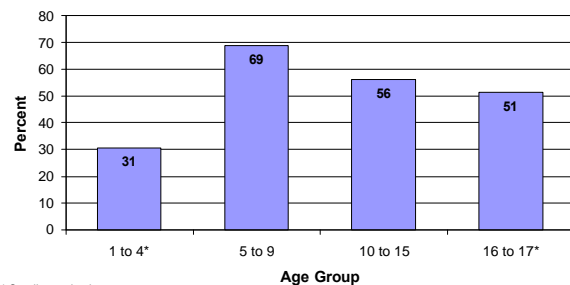


**Two or More Hours of Television**

Fifty-three percent of selected children aged 1 to 17 years were reported to have watched two or more hours of television the day prior to the interview, compared to 50% of children statewide in 1999.

Percent of children at risk for watching two or more hours of TV the previous day varied by age of child, with the greatest risk observed among children aged 5 to 9 years (69%) and the lowest risk among children aged 1 to 4 years (31%).

Two or More Hours of TV by Age of Selected Child



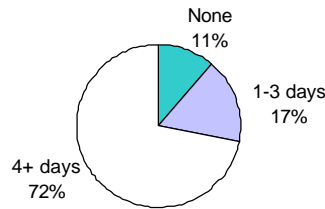
\* Small sample size

## Parent-Child Activities

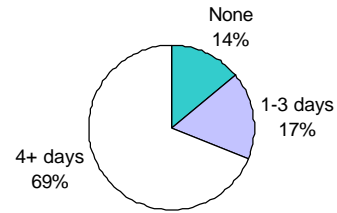
### Children Ages 0 to 4

The majority of parent and guardian respondents with a selected child aged 0 to 4 years had participated with their child in each of the activities listed on the survey four or more of the past seven days. Playing a non-physical game was the most common activity. There is still room for improvement. Fourteen percent had not read to their child any of the past seven days and 10% had not played a sport, physical game, or exercised with the child any of the past seven days.

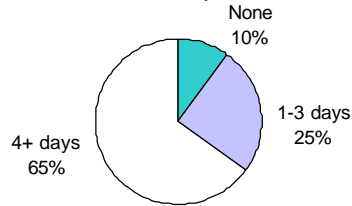
How many days in the past seven did you play a non-physical game with your child?



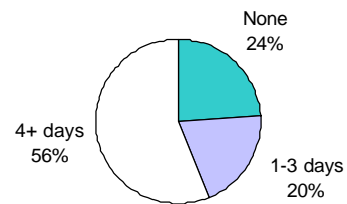
How many days in the past seven did you read to your child?



How many days in the past seven did you play a sport, physical game, or exercise with your child?



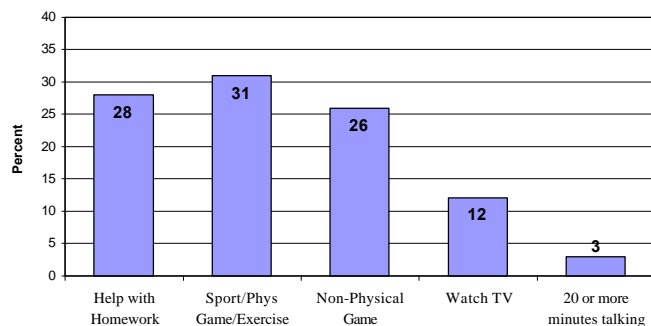
How many days in the past seven did you watch TV with your child?



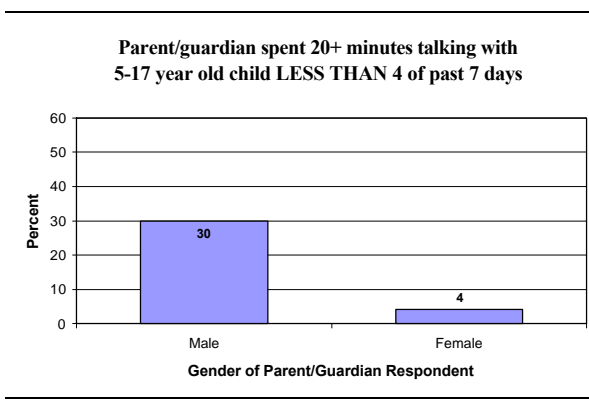
### Children Ages 5 to 17

Among respondents with a selected child aged 5 to 17 years, talking with the child was the most common of the activities listed. Eighty-four percent of respondents had spent at least 20 minutes talking with their child four or more of the past seven days. Exercising/playing a physical game, playing a non-physical game, and helping the child with homework or a school activity were among the least common. Among those with the selected child currently in school, fifty percent of respondents had helped the child with homework or a school activity four or more of the past seven days; twenty-eight percent had not helped with homework on any of the past seven days. Only 23% had exercised with the selected child four or more of the past seven days, and 31% had not exercised or played a physical game with the child on any of the past seven days.

Percent of parents spending *none* of the past seven days participating in the following activities with their child

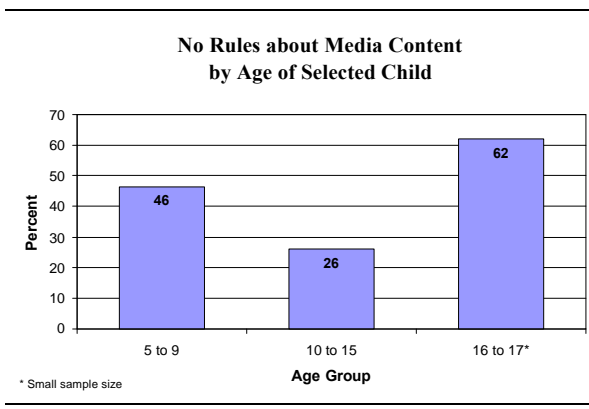


Sixteen percent of respondents had not spent at least 20 minutes talking with their child on four or more of the past seven days. Male parent/guardian respondents were much more likely than their female counterparts (30% versus 4%) to have spent *less than* four out of the past seven days talking with their child for at least 20 minutes.



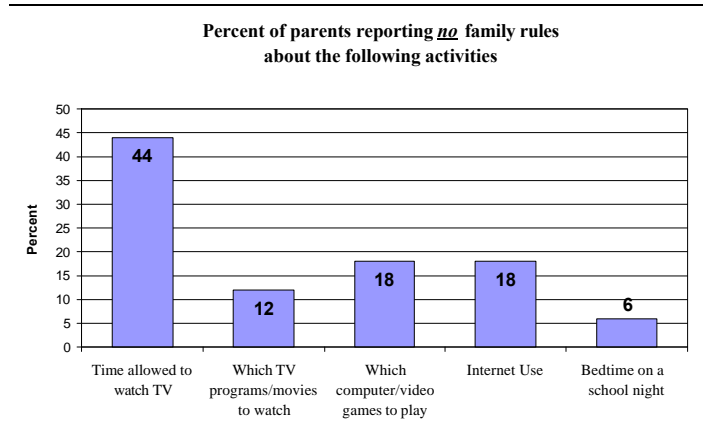
## No Rules about Media Content

Forty percent of children aged 5 to 17 years were at risk for media content exposure, meaning there were no family rules about computer/video game content, television program/movie content, or Internet use. Risk was highest among children aged 16 and 17 years (62%) and lowest among children aged 10 to 15 years (26%). Risk appeared to be higher for children in families with lower household incomes and where the respondent had a lower level of educational attainment, but these differences were not significant. Among children in families with no rules about the *number* of hours of TV watched per day, 51% were also at risk for media content exposure.



## Family Rules

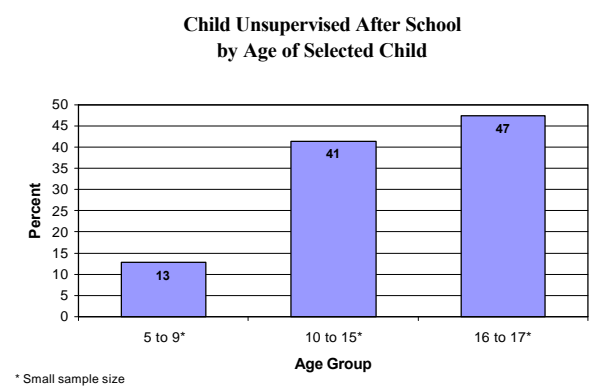
Only six percent of parents reported having no rules about bedtime on school nights (among children aged 5 to 17). Twelve percent of parents reported no family rules about *which* television programs the selected child could watch, while 44% had no rules about *how much* television could be watched.



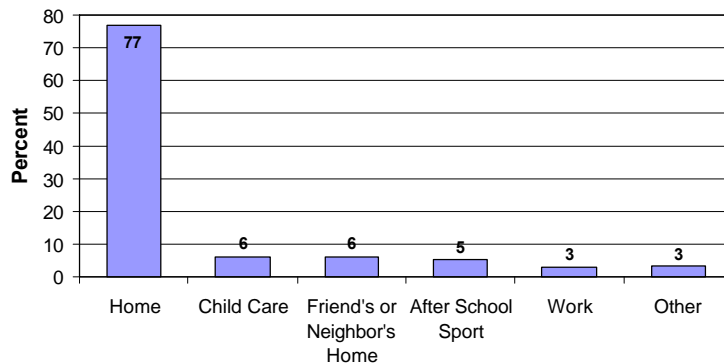
## Child Unsupervised After School

Thirty-four percent of children currently in school were unsupervised after school one or more days during the past week. Not surprisingly, reported percentages increased with increasing age of the child.

The vast majority (77%) of school-age children went home after school. Six percent went to some type of child care.



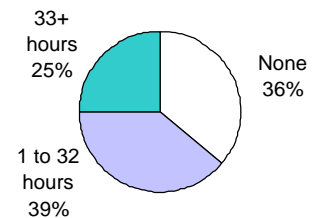
**Where does the selected child go most often when school lets out?**



## Child Care

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of selected children aged 0 to 4 years regularly spent at least part of their week in a day care center, day care home, or preschool, with 25% spending the equivalent of four days or more in a preschool or out-of-home child care.

**About how many hours per week does the selected child spend in a day care center, day care home, or pre-school?**



## References

<sup>1</sup> Soubhi, H. and Potvin, L. (2000) Homes and families as health promotion settings. In: Poland BD, Green LW, Rootman I (eds.) Settings for Health Promotion: Linking Theory and Practice. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Governor's Substance Abuse Council (1999). Kansas planning framework. State Incentive Cooperative Agreement, Federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.