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How To Break TV Addiction

**Tips from a White Dot mother of four TV-free children:
Five Ways to Distract Baby while You Wash Dishes**

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* Let baby hold and explore kitchen tools. Blunt tools such as tongs, potato mashers and measuring cups are fascinating to the crawling set. My small kids get bored of the smooth-plastic baby toys and long for "real world" objects like measuring spoons. I dole them out (with supervision) while I wash dishes or try to clean up. A leg-grabbing child who's whining to be carried can be distracted by an unexplored kitchen device for several minutes.

* Create mega-playpens with baby gates. The hall in our first apartment made a fabulous "baby run" when I propped a gate at either end. My son would screech when popped into a regular playpen, but was content watching me and playing with his toys while in his "exercise yard."

* Feed baby a snack while your elbows are in the suds. Strap her into a high chair, so she can't get into trouble, fling Cheerios on the tray and away you go.

* Keep up a running conversation with baby. Act silly, sing to radio, dance around. You're so much more entertaining than a plastic box.

* Permit kitchen exploration. Keep unbreakable cups, plastic plates and

Tupperware in a lower cabinet. Allow baby to remove and explore them while you work. Make a cheerful game out of putting them away afterwards. Once your child starts creating nesting stacks out of the tupperware containers, you'll really have a Baby Einstein on your hands!

Six Helpful Ways to Get Going in the Morning without TV

- * Give child her own alarm clock. Grouchy morning people hate to be bossed around when they wake up. Let the clock bear the brunt of your child's resentment! Let the obnoxious repetitive beeping save your voice.
- * Set out clothes (yours and the kids') the night before. Or at least be able to locate clean socks for everyone before the morning rush.
- * Everybody dressed-to-the-shoes before breakfast. Breakfast to a hungry child is a great motivator. On the other hand, a full tummy makes the need to get dressed less pressing--and Legos more interesting--especially to a five-year-old. I try to entice kids rather than nag them to get dressed. "Let's get you all set up for breakfast. What kind of cereal are you going to have after you're dressed?"
- * Get up half an hour earlier yourself. (Ugh.) You can do it if you make it worth your while to get up. Set the goal to be dressed and showered before the kids awake. I set up the coffee pot the night before, make time to read the newspaper, work on projects. It's worth it to become a morning person for that silent time without Pint-Sized Breakfast Tyrants.
- * Start the morning with an empty sink. Of course, now that you're not watching TV after dinner every night you have a chance to wash the dishes before you go to bed, right? Facing dirty dishes in the morning poisons my whole day.
- * Put on your own oxygen mask first. It's time to go. Get yourself ready and then get the kids set up. Put on your own coat, get your stuff together. If someone is pitching a tantrum about shoes, you can throw them in the diaper bag and leave anyway. If a squirming child refuses to dress for the weather, I throw a jacket over my arm and, usually, have it available. Sometimes, if we're going to be inside or in the car, I skip the coat. If a certain two-year-old takes off shoes on every single car trip, I let her walk into the house barefoot, making sure she carries the shoes and socks herself.

Five Tips for taking a shower without the television

- * Take advantage of nap time. Put off cleaning up until baby is asleep.
- * Let baby play in the bathroom. (Of course, you will have put all cleaning supplies in hard-to-reach places.) We keep a basket of large shells in the bathroom. I block the bathroom door with a baby gate and the kids love to play with shells. Play peek-a-boo around shower curtain every-so-often to keep tabs on baby.
- * Shower at night. There's an old saying, "A shower the night before is worth two hours in the morning." All the more true when you have little

children.

* Take super-short showers. Schedule time-consuming shower activities like hair-washing and leg-shaving for every other day. Then take quick rinse-off showers on other days.

* Take shower with your toddler. It can be done, as long as you're patient and get in and out quickly.

TV 'Rewires' Childrens' Brains - Leads To ADD

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