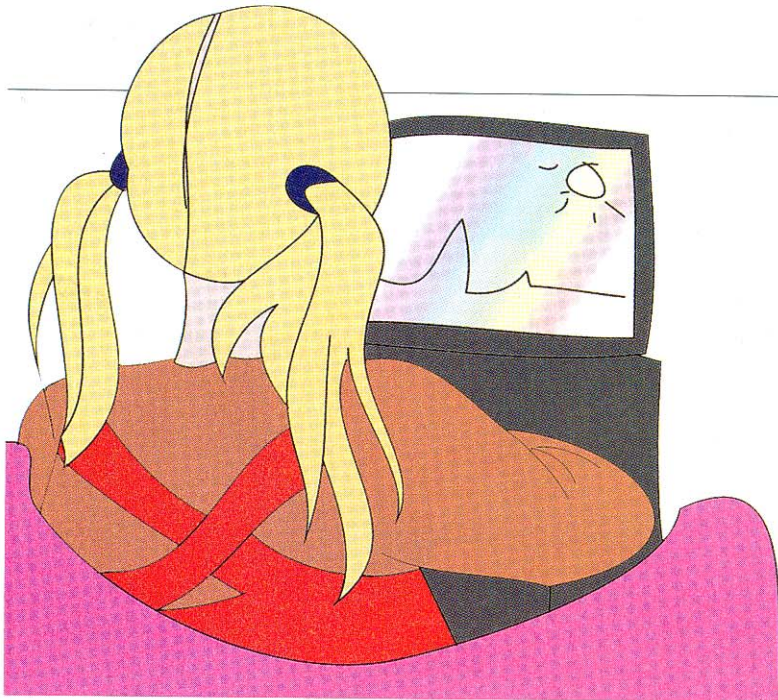


By Christiane Lavin



## New Thinking on TV and ADHD

Previous research linked television exposure to attention problems in young children. Now a new study, which followed 5,000 kids from kindergarten to first grade, suggests there is no cause-and-effect association. "It may be that parents of very active children resort to using the TV as a babysitter more often than parents of less active children," says lead study author Tara Stevens, Ed.D., assistant professor of educational psychology at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Another possible explanation for the discrepancy: Past studies looked mostly at the TV viewing behavior of children between ages 1 and 3. "Younger children's brains may be more sensitive to TV than kindergartners'," says Dr. Stevens.

Of course, there are other reasons to limit TV viewing. "Television can increase aggressive behavior, promote obesity, and inhibit a child's exploration of the world," says Dr. Stevens. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours of TV per day for kids over 2 and none for those younger.

For more insights on children and ADHD, go to [www.child.com/web\\_links](http://www.child.com/web_links).

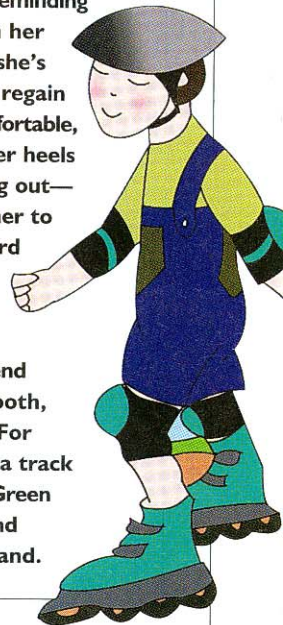
### HOW TO TEACH YOUR CHILD TO ROLLERBLADE

By kindergarten, most kids have the balance and coordination necessary to rollerblade, says David T. Bernhardt, M.D., professor in the department of pediatrics and ortho/rehab at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison. "If your child can balance on one foot and hop she's probably ready." Once your child's ready to roll, skating instructor and exercise expert Janet Miller Sheehan, founder of the United Skate Schools Group in El Segundo, CA, offers this advice:

■ **GET IN POSITION** To prevent falls, start beginners on a textured surface, like the grass or carpet. Your child should stand with her spine straight and knees bent. Her chin should be level—no looking at the ground.

■ **PRACTICE BALANCE** If she seems unsteady, have her hold her arms straight out in front like Superman. Take her hands and slowly pull her forward as you walk backward, reminding her to stand up straight. Teach her to grab her knees if she thinks she's going to fall. (This will help her regain her balance.) Once she feels comfortable, have her take tiny steps with her heels close together and toes pointing out—forming a V shape. Encourage her to move by placing one foot forward and using her heel brake to slow down and stop.

■ **PLAY GAMES** As your child's confidence builds, gradually extend the distance she skates on smooth, flat surfaces like the sidewalk. For motivation, use chalk to create a track or suggest a game of Red Light, Green Light. This will help her relax and take her mind off the task at hand.



### Music and Special Needs

Teachers and parents are tuning in to the benefits of music therapy. It motivates children with special needs in a unique way, says Mary Adamek, Ph.D., director of clinical activities in music therapy at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. For example, preschoolers with language disorders will have fun singing a "Hello" song using the names of their classmates and not realize they're practicing their speech, language, and social skills at the same time. "Music also promotes confidence and replenishes self-esteem," adds Gary Allegretto, founding director of Harmonikids, a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles that provides harmonicas and music instruction to kids with special needs ([harmonikids.org](http://harmonikids.org)). To learn more about music therapy, visit [musictherapy.org](http://musictherapy.org).

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