

## Adolescent TV Use<sup>1</sup>

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More than likely you've commonly heard the most recent generations referred to as Generation X and now Generation Y. However, in a new report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, researchers renamed this younger group as "Generation M" to stand for media influence in their lives (Rideout, Roberts, and Foehr 2005). Indeed, there are days that I wonder if my children can unplug from the many digital and electronic devices in their lives.

Between television, computers, video games, MP3 players, and cell phones, media use among 8- to 18-year-olds has exploded in the past decade as they now devote an estimated 25% of each day to media use.

In the report "Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 year olds," researchers point out that instead of replacing television with Internet, video games, and new music technologies, today's youth are instead "media multitasking" (Rideout, Roberts, and Foehr 2005, p. 39), using two or more media at once. These media-savvy youth may be instant messaging (or "IM'ing") while they're on their phones and watching television – likely while they declare they're getting their homework done.

A surprising revelation was that the children who spent the most time with media also reported spending more time on hobbies, hanging out with their parents, and in physical activities. They did, however, spend less time reading (Rideout, Roberts, and Foehr 2005).

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While reading more is certainly linked to higher grades, the “M-Generation” is also doing all right in school and appears to be a content group of kids overall. Still, given the time children are exposed to media and the range of material they may encounter, parents should still monitor their children’s media use and how it impacts their lives.

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## Reference

Rideout, V., Roberts, D. F., Foehr, U. G. (2005). Generation M: Media in the lives of 8-18 year olds. Retrieved April 27, 2006 from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/Executive-Summary-Generation-M-Media-in-the-Lives-of-8-18-Year-olds.pdf>