

# Mrs. Swansbrough's Reading Tips for Parents December 2007

## What's *Mesmerizing* and in Every Home?

If you guessed television, you're right!

But ... do you know how television can affect your child's reading and academic achievement?

*Here's what research says about the amount of TV teenagers watch:*

- American children, ages 2-17, watch television on average almost 25 hours per week or 3 ½ hours a day. Almost one in five watch more than 35 hours of TV each week.
- Twenty percent of 2-7 year olds, 46% of 8-12 year olds, and 56% of 13-17 year olds have TVs in their bedrooms.
- In a national education study, older students reported spending 4 times as many hours each week watching television as doing homework.
- Children spend more time watching television than any other activity except sleeping.

*Here's what research says about the impact of TV-viewing on teens:*

- Successful readers read often. Those who score in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile read an average of at least 40 minutes/day, those who score in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile read approximately 13 minutes/day, and those scoring in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile read only 1 or 2 minutes/day.
- Students who are heavy TV viewers (over 3 hours per day), show the greatest decline in reading ability.
- Television on in the background interferes with the retention of skills and information during homework time.
- In a long-term study of high schoolers, researchers found that viewing educational television programs as pre-schoolers was associated with higher grades, more reading, less aggression and more value placed on academics when those children reached high school. What they watch does matter!

