

# ISLAMIC CENTER OF AMERICA

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## Television Watching Policy

Studies have shown that children can benefit substantially from viewing educational television.<sup>1</sup> In one such study, children who watched "Barney" demonstrated greater counting skills, knowledge of colors and shapes, vocabulary, and social skills than children who did not watch the program.<sup>2</sup> Although all children can benefit from educational television, it has been found to be particularly beneficial to children from lower-income families. A study demonstrated that children from low- and moderate-income families who frequently watched "Sesame Street" and other educational programs from ages 2 to 4 performed better on vocabulary, school readiness, pre-reading, and math tests than non-viewers, as much as three years later.<sup>3</sup>

Here at Madrasatu Ahlis Sunnah, the following television watching guidelines should be implemented in each respective classroom:

- **Under 2 years old:** No television watching for children under the age of 2.
- **2-3 years old:** One half-hour per day.
- **3-5 years old:** 1 hour per day.

Choose suitable programs: Let the children watch programs that they will enjoy, but that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, with no adult themes. For example, children who watch "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and "Sesame Street" have been shown to learn task persistence, imaginative play, and letter and number skills.<sup>4</sup>

Turn the TV off if it's not being watched: If the TV is not being actively watched, turn it off. As background noise, it can be distracting, making it difficult for children to focus on more important sounds, like their teacher's voice.

### References:

1. The Commission's Television Task Force found that educational programming positively affects the development of children, particularly preschool children, whose limited reading capacity restricts the range of educational resources available to them. See Federal Communications Commission, "Television Programming for Children, A Report of the Children's Task Force, Vol. I," at 20 (1979).
2. Jerome Singer, Ph.D., and Dorothy Singer, Ed.D., "Barney & Friends as Education and Entertainment," Feb 25, 1994, at 21, 31.
3. See Aletha C. Huston and John C. Wright ("Huston" and "Wright") Comments at 3. A complete copy of this study was submitted as Attachment 1 to the comments filed by CTW.
4. See Senate Report at 5; see also S. Rep. No. 797, 101st Cong., 1st Sess. 4 (1989) (Senate Report accompanying National Endowment for Children's Educational Television Act – Referred to herein as "Endowment Report").