

OutThere



OUT TAKE

Turn On, Tune In,
Shut Up

BY MARJORIE INGALL

My kid watches *The Backyardigans*. And *Sesame Street*. And *Maisy*, *Dora the Explorer* and *64 Zoo Lane*. She doesn't watch *The Wiggles* because I harbor a fear that those perky, dancing Aussies and their merrily jitterbugging band of child actor-dancers are zombies who intend to kill me in my sleep.

Yup, my kid watches a lot of TV—probably somewhere between an hour to two a day. That's within the bounds of what the American Academy of Pediatrics says is OK, but you know those guys in white coats are still unimpressed. Besides, if my four-year-old's watching Noggin, that means my 14-month-old is too, despite the AAP's edict that the under-two set should not be watching any TV at all. Hey, AAP, have you tried to spoon yogurt into a baby, pack a reasonably healthy pre-K lunch and suck down a blessed cup of coffee without a little electronic babysitting help? Stop your judging, you harpy AAP! You probably have the luxury of disdaining TV while you pay your live-in nanny to force your children to play with unpainted organic pull-toys made of sustainable Guatemalan hardwoods!

Bite me, AAP. And bite me, all you superior parents who put on your hammy blank look when the rest of us are talking about *Project Runway* at drop-off and we know you're just dying for us to make eye contact with you so you can say, "Oh, we don't watch *teeeeelevision*." And bite me, you who lie about your kids' TV consumption in yet another form of NYC one-upsmomship ("between Japanese immersion, modern dance, and her shift at the soup kitchen, she just doesn't have time!"). And bite me, you who

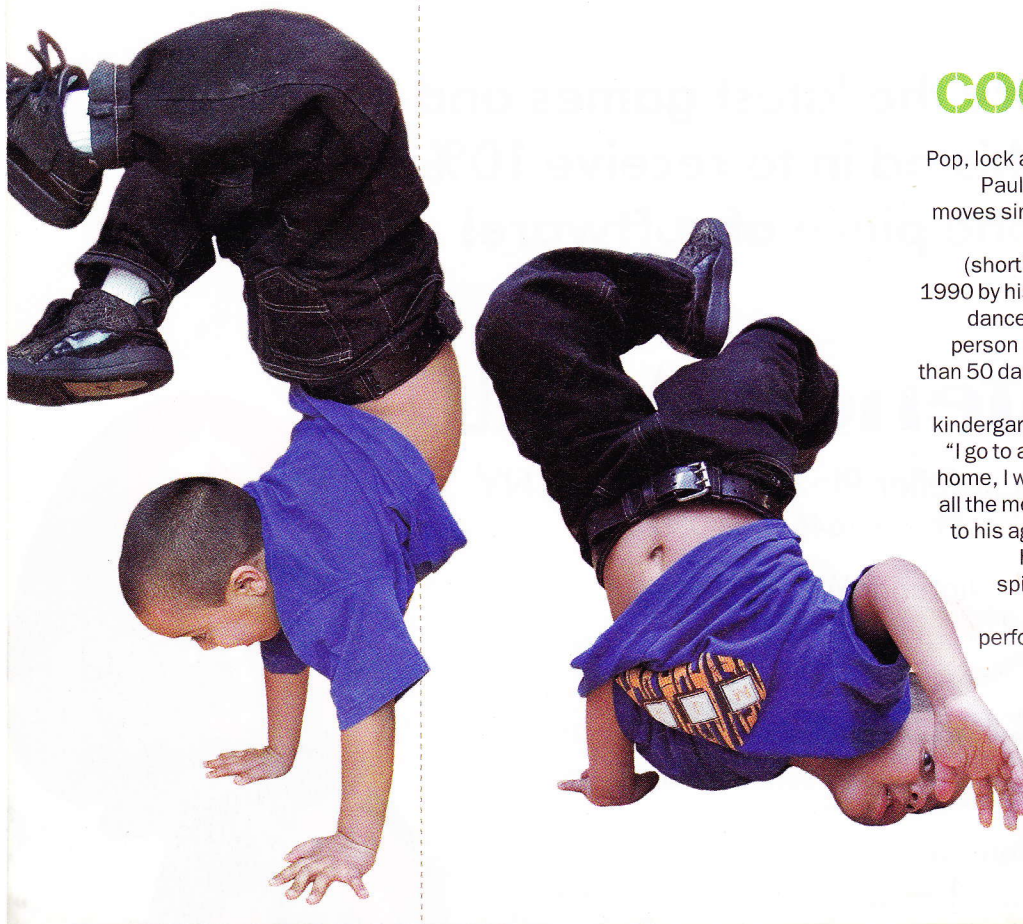
somehow distinguish between videos (which are fine) and television (Satan's Own Box). Um, how are they different? Spare me your tortured logic about how with videos, you have control over your child's viewing habits (and advertising consumption), but with TV you don't.

For one thing, there are actually television networks with no ads during the shows. There is also this contraption called a DVR, or TiVo. This miraculous invention lets you choose what your child sees, and it makes the commercials disappear. It's kooky! The AAP mutters dourly that the average child sees more than 20,000 ads a year, but when was this research done? My child has seen, perhaps, five. And she's only seen those because I was too slow with the TiVo remote.

Besides, why assume that all TV is brain-rotting? I admit I've shepped a little nachas from hearing my kid recite the colors in Spanish after *Dora*, or hearing her ask, "Mama, where does the sky stop and space start?" after *Little Einsteins*.

You people who treat your TV sets like the crack cocaine of the furniture world aren't doing your kids any favors. The minute you make something illicit, it becomes gorge-worthy. Look, I'm not suggesting we let our kids zone out indefinitely. But a reasonable amount of TV can be fun for them *and* a break for you. But what do I know? I watch *Project Runway*.

Marjorie Ingall is a contributing editor at Glamour, a columnist for The Forward and a mother of two in the East Village.



COOLER THAN YOU

Pop, lock and break! Meet five-year-old swing kid Noah Paul—the B-boy sensation. Noah's been bustin' moves since he was two, as a member of the Spanish Harlem-based hip-hop dance troupe KR3Ts (shorthand for Keep Rising to the Top). Founded in 1990 by his mother, Violeta Galagarza (a former breakdancer herself), the group has grown from a three-person act, starring Violeta and her sisters, to more than 50 dancers from all five boroughs—most of whom are much older than Noah. So how does a kindergartner go from coloring to doing midair poses? "I go to a lot of rehearsals," he says. "And when I get home, I watch my mom's old videotapes and practice all the moves." Still, his professional diligence yields to his age every now and then: When asked to name his favorite move, he smiles and says, "I like spinning on my head." To catch Noah in action, check out www.kr3ts.com for upcoming performances around the city. KATHARINE RUST