

## **RESEARCH LINKS TV/VIDEO GAME PLAYING WITH CHILD OBESITY; HEALTH EXPERTS BACK A NEW APPROACH**

*Analysis of data highlighted by the Trust for America's Health 2007 Annual Report shows children risk being overweight if spending over 2 hours a day with TV/Video games. Over 45% of Americas 12 – 17 year olds spent more than two hours per day glued to a screen, more than 1 in 7 children are overweight. The state by state analysis suggests hope for new research using video games to increase physical activity.*

Researchers in the UK have turned to America as the source of information to extend a study carried out last month observing children's attitudes and choices in exercise. The figures highlighted by the "F as in Fat" annual report were retrieved from the Data Resource Center on Child and Adolescent Health website. The analysis of these figures reveals a strong positive correlation between hours spent on TV/Video game play and the percentage of children classed as overweight per state.

The state of Utah was acclaimed with the lowest percentage of children overweight, and was found to have the second lowest proportion of children spending 2 or more hours on TV/Video game play. The District of Columbia, found to have the highest percentage of overweight children, also had the highest percentage nationwide of children spending an incredible 4 hours plus in front of a screen.

The research was undertaken after a study revealed that children were 6 times more likely to take to exercise if it involved a video game. Regular exercise and interactive games, which depended on the children exercising, were provided as free choices to children. 10% of active time was spent on kids fitness equipment compared with 60% on identical machines connected through Gamercize products to a games console, the remaining 30% spent with traditional games and magazines.

The results of this experiment have been hailed by health experts as a step forward in working towards reducing obesity among the young. Dr Colin Waine, chairman of the UK's National Obesity Forum, said: "This is a very interesting result – it opens up a possible way of getting children more active."

While Dr Ian Campbell, medical director of Weight Concern and associate specialist in the overweight clinic of University Hospital Nottingham, added: "This test encouraged children to be more active, and that's a great starting point.

"I know as a dad that the reason why video games are so popular is because they are so good, and kids will not leave them. It's better to be smart and work with the games, making children more active in the process."

In the study the video game could be changed by the children, found to be a key feature in maintaining interest in exercising. Youngsters quickly lost motivation on the exercise machines operated in isolation, and played quietly and read the magazines when excess energy was burnt off through Gamercizing.

Gamercize company director, Richard Coshott said: "The study showed clearly that children will choose active gaming in unstructured play over traditional games and exercise alone. The data available to us from the USA has been invaluable in supporting our research. The analysis does not prove video games cause obesity, but it does show games consoles are perfectly placed to help kids be more active. Combining video games and exercise could be their first step to healthy, active lives."

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**About Gamercize:** Gamercize, a company behind patented exergaming accessories for PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, PS2, PC, Xbox and Gamecube, released a children's version, the GZ Kids-Sport, in the UK. The company aim is to encourage exercise and fitness through motivation and enjoyment, by the application of technology. Gamercize is a member of the Fitness Industry Association. Its website is [www.gamercize.net](http://www.gamercize.net).

**To receive a copy of the USA analysis, children's study and/or press quality images, please contact:**

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## Child Exercise Study Images – August 2007

Study—Games Activity



Study—Gamerize Activity



Study—Exercise Activity



## Correlation between TV and Video Game play and percentage overweight juniors per US State

