Reducing Screen Time for Children
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The mantra throughout this issue of Pediatric Annals on Children, Adolescents, and the Media that is guest edited by Victor Strasburger, MD, is that pediatricians repeatedly need to ask two questions that are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). These are: 1) How much entertainment screen time does the child/teen spend per day? and 2) Is there a television or Internet connection in his/her bedroom? Getting parents to limit their kids to no more than 2 hours per day of screen time and excluding TVs, DVDs, and Internet access from children’s bedrooms are highly sensible and important goals, which are often difficult to achieve. The articles in this issue highlight why this is important and worth our effort to promote.

I strongly recommend reading the Resident’s Viewpoint by Melinda Rogers, MD (see page 586). Dr. Rogers’ brief article touches upon the problems with current media, with an increasing proportion of media packaged as cartoons but with highly inappropriate content for children (South Park and Family Guy, for example) and with violence-packed video games increasingly popular. This can be a tough sell to our patients and families, but one that seems well worth the effort.

The 2009 postage stamp from Morocco showing the image of children in front of a computer screen is highly relevant to the theme of this issue of Pediatric Annals. The symbol in the upper-left corner of the stamp is that of the World Telecommunications and Information Society, which has emphasized the theme of Child Online Protection and Protecting Children in Cyberspace, with HM Queen Silvia of Sweden as Patron. This effort has been supported by a variety of UN agencies and has focused on the following online risks: pornography, violence, online games and addiction, online fraud, cyber bullying, and racism.

The other stamps shown here do not relate directly to this issue’s theme. They include the beautiful red 2008 Spanish stamp of mother and child and the 2009 U.S. stamp in the Distinguished American series that honors the remarkable Mary Woodard Lasker (1900-1994; see page 537). Mrs. Lasker was an amazingly influential health activist with a very long career as an effective Congressional lobbyist for medical research and health causes. In 1942, she and her husband, Albert, founded the Lasker Foundation for...
Medical Research, which has given awards since 1946 to living persons for major contributions to the medical sciences, with Basic Science, Clinical Science, and Public Service Awards. These are often referred to as “America’s Nobel Prizes,” and 76 Lasker Award recipients have gone on to receive Nobel Prizes. Mrs. Lasker supported President Truman’s call for universal health in-