The media and marketing industries’ assault on infants and toddlers begins “by training babies to depend on screens for entertainment and the things they sell for amusement and comfort. Before they can even ask for it, we decorate their cribs, clothing, toys and diapers with media characters and place them in front of screens at every opportunity.”

**Branding Babies**

- By six months, babies are forming mental images of corporate logos and mascots. According to market research, babies are requesting brands as soon as they can speak.

- Baby paraphernalia is routinely festooned with licensed characters—these same icons will sell them media, food, toys, and other products throughout childhood.

- In their quest for “cradle to grave brand loyalty,” companies that manufacture products for adults also target babies. Examples include the “John Deere Little Princess Romper” and a Harley Davidson line of onesies.

**Screen Saturated Infants and Toddlers:**

- By the age of three months, 40% of infants are watching screen media regularly. By the time children are two, the number jumps to 90%.

- 19% of babies one year and under have a TV in their bedroom.

- 14% of children under two spend more than 2 hours a day with screen media.

- Marketers urge parents to soothe fussy babies with cell phone videos.

**The Baby Media Scam:**

- Baby media companies routinely make unfounded educational claims to sell parents on their products. Brand names such as *Brainy Baby*, *Baby Einstein*, and *Baby Genius* are powerful—and deceptive—marketing tools.

- 56% of parents of young children believe that baby videos are good for child development.

- The most common reason parents give for putting babies and toddlers in front of screens is that they are beneficial to children’s brain development.

- Disney’s *Baby Einstein* has sold more than 20 million videos.

**Screen Time is Not Educational for Babies and Toddlers:**

- While television can be an effective teaching tool for older children, there is no credible evidence that babies and toddlers learn anything useful from screens.
Screen media is not an effective means of teaching babies and toddlers the meaning of new words. Unlike reading to babies, viewing Disney’s Baby Wordsworth regularly does not promote language development. What babies do learn from screen media is to recognize, and become attached to, commercialized media characters.

**Research Suggests Screen time for Babies May Even Be Harmful:**

- Television, for babies, is associated negatively with cognitive development and regular sleep patterns. It can also be habituating.

- The more time babies spend viewing television, the less time they spend interacting with parents or engaging in creative play—two activities known to promote learning.

- For babies 8 to 16 months, watching baby videos is associated with slower language development.

In 2006, CCFC filed a Federal Trade Commission complaint against Baby Einstein, Brainy Baby, and Baby FirstTV for false and deceptive marketing. As a result, the marketing for Baby Einstein and Brainy Baby was substantially altered—eliminating many of the educational claims cited in CCFC’s complaint. However, the FTC did not require the companies to acknowledge their deception or to compensate the parents they deceived. BabyFirstTV continues to market itself as an educational tool for infants and toddlers.

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6 http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/107/2/423, retrieved August 6, 2008.
12 http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/107/2/423, retrieved August 6, 2008.