A healthy, balanced “TV diet” requires planning and supervision. TV viewing must be part of a well-rounded daily routine that includes adequate amounts of rest, play, exercise, and socialization. Parents can help their children develop a healthy relationship with television by setting limits and establishing a schedule for viewing. For example, parents can set a limit on daily screen time, choose programs that are appropriate for their child’s age and interests, and encourage their child to take regular breaks from the TV. They can also model healthy TV habits by limiting their own screen time.

Watching television can be a valuable learning experience, but it’s important to choose programs that are appropriate for the child’s age and interests. Parents can also use television as a way to learn more about different cultures and perspectives. For example, they can watch shows that are based on books or that feature on-screen subjects such as geography or sports. Whenever possible, parents can connect viewing with learning. Many programs and characters are designed to inspire curiosity and learning, and parents can use this as an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions with their child.

However, television can also be a source of negative content. Programs that depict violence, sexual situations, or inappropriate language can have a negative impact on children. Parents should be aware of the content of the programs their child is watching and select shows that are appropriate for their age and interests. They can also use parental controls to block inappropriate content or set limits on screen time.

In addition to setting limits on screen time, parents can help their child develop more age-appropriate habits by encouraging them to participate in movement, fitness activities, and sports. These activities can be a fun and healthy way to spend time and can help children develop a positive relationship with exercise. They can also help children develop important motor skills and coordination.

By setting limits on screen time and encouraging their child to participate in age-appropriate activities, parents can help their child develop a healthy relationship with television. They can also use television as a tool for learning and socialization, and help their child develop age-appropriate habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.