

DO YOU KNOW WHAT
YOUR KIDS ARE
WATCHING?

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- One third of 8-11 year olds have seen films rated 15 or 18
- Nearly one-quarter see these films regularly
- 90 per cent of households own a video
- 10 per cent of children have a video in their own room
- 52 per cent have a TV in their own room

The programme Children of the video talked to children aged 8-11 in Manchester, London and Bristol to discover what they really watch-and how it affects them. Its findings, and those of an accompanying survey specially compiled for the programme, make compelling reading.

One adult, who isn't surprised by the figures above is Jack Sanger, Professor of Applied Research In Education at City College, Norwich. He is halfway through a two-year study on young people and entertainment-based screen technologies-such as videos and computer games- which involves observing more than hundred 4-9 year olds in their homes and at school.

»How children react to images they are presented with is entirely dependent on their own personalities, background and experience« he says.

»If a child is a disturbed child and watches a violent video, then the video may provide the clothing for that child-a symbolic expression which denotes the kind of disturbance the child has. On the other hand, lots of our children would appear to be extraordinary stable, capable, innovative, enthusiastic citizens and they watch appalling things and can brush them off with great ease. They can distinguish perfectly well between fact and fiction- indeed they would be more disturbed by graphic news coverage of Rwanda than they ever would be by Freddy Krueger.

We have got some evidence to show that peer group pressure has a lot of influence on children's viewing habits. Certainly, video films had a cachet with the young-they will, if possible, do what their peers are also doing. Even if parents edit these things out of the home, children may see them in other people's houses. Or they will get older sisters or brothers to get videos for them.

Parents and teachers are getting left behind. It sounds stereotypical, but we found, particularly with women, a large-scale inability to deal with technology. There are mothers who stay up until midnight to record something for their 7-year-old because all you can do is push the button on at the actual time of the programme. It leads them to buy

video games and computers for their kids while not having any knowledge of what is going on in a child's world.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO?

Parents must talk to their children about what they do and what they see and get them to understand the nature of the medium. If parents feel that a film is inappropriate for a child, it is not enough just to say: »No, you can't watch that!«. It is far better to debate why not. They need to talk over how a video is constructed, what the intention is, what the plotlines and narrative are, what is good and bad in it, motivations and so on, because children do not have the language to deal with some of the things. Children are being left essentially to handle the experiences in whatever way they can, and a lot of that time it is merely as emotional content.

MERELY (adj)

- samo, le, edino, zgolj
- the same as only
- Children are being left essentially to handle the experiences in whatever way they can, and a lot of that time it is **merely** as emotional content.
- I was not complaining, I **merely** said that I was tired.
- /'miə·li/

INAPPROPRIATE (adj)

- neprimeren
- unsuitable
- If parents feel that a film is **inappropriate** for a child, it is not enough just to say : »No, you can't watch that!«.
- His casual behaviour was wholly **inappropriate** for such a formal occasion.
- /,ɪn·ə'prə ·pri·ət /

BUTTON (n)

- gumb
- a small object that you press to operate a device or a machine
- There are mothers who stay up until midnight to record something for their 7-year-old because all you can do is push the **button** on at the actual time of the programme.
- He pressed on a **button** and the doorbell rang.
- /b t n /

DISTURBED (adj)

- moten
- so mentally confused or ill that special treatment is necessary
- If a child is a **disturbed** child and watches a violent video, then the video may provide the clothing for that child—a symbolic expression which denotes the kind of disturbance the child has.
- The most deeply **disturbed** patients are kept in a separate part of the hospital.

- / di'stɜ:bd /

FICTION (n)

- izmišljotina
- a false report or statement which you pretend is true
- They can distinguish perfectly well between fact and **fiction**.
- You never really know what is fact or what is **fiction** when he tells you something.
- / 'fɪk· n /

DISTINGUISH (obj)

- razločiti
- to notice or understand the difference between two things
- They can **distinguish** perfectly well between fact and fiction.
- He is colour-blind and he cannot **distinguish** between two things.
- / di'stɪ ·gwɪ /

CACHET (n)

-
- a quality which marks someone or something as special and worth respect
- Certainly, video films had a **cachet** with the young-they will, if possible, do what their peers are also doing.
- They have international **cachet** that comes from wealth.
- / 'kæ ·eɪ /

INABILITY (n)

- nesposobnost, nezmožnost
- lack of ability to do something
- It sounds stereotypical, but we found, particularly with woman, a large-scale **inability** to deal with technology.

- Your **inability** to use the computer could be a serious disadvantage when you are applying for jobs.
- / ʌn·ə'bil·i·ti /

INVOLVE (obj)

- vsebovati
- to include someone or something in something
- Which **involves** observing more than hundred 4-9 year olds in their homes and at school.
- The second accident **involved** two cars.
- / ɪn'v l v /

PRESSURE (n)

- pritisk
- the things that happen to a person which can make feel anxious and unhappy
- We have got some evidence to show that peer group **pressure** has a lot of influence on children s viewing habits.
- He has got a lot of **pressure** on him right now.
- / 'pre ·ə /

SUMMARY

The study made in Britain with children of age 8-11 discovered what kids really watch and how affects them.

Jack Sanger is now working on study about TV, video and computer games and he is not surprised about the results. He thinks that children can react to images they see very different. Children will probably watch the same videos and play the same games as they peers and even if parents are trying to reduce this influence, they are not going to succeed.

The biggest problem here is that adults are left behind. There is a large-scale inability to deal with with technology and parents are buying inappropriate videos and games for their children.