

The influence of the Media on Children

Counseling 448

Interventions and Advocacy for Children

The Media Is a Significant Environmental Influence

Time spent watching TV by age/per week:

Children aged 2-5 average 25 hours

Children aged 6-11 average 20-28 hours

Children aged 12-17 average 23 hours

"By adulthood (18 yrs) most Americans have spent more time in front of the television set than in school, and far more than they have spent talking with their teachers, their friends and their parents."

Time Spent Watching Television

Takes away from important activities such as;

Reading

School work

Playing

Family Interaction

Social Development

Knowing the difference between fantasy and reality

Children who watch Television

Are more likely to:

Have lower grades in school

Read fewer books

Exercise less: High Couch Potato Index

Be overweight

Use television as an escape from reality

Be less imaginative

See violence as an appropriate way to solve interpersonal problems

Respect and Antisocial

Respect for authority, respect for self, and respect for others is negatively affected by television:

The average child will watch 8,000 murders on TV before finishing elementary school

By age 18, the average American has seen 200,000 acts of violence on TV, including

40,000 murders

Television can be a powerful influence in developing value systems and shaping behavior

Comparisons of Six Major

Arousal Hypothesis

Social Learning Theory

Disinhibition Hypothesis

Aggression Reduction

Cognitive Processing Theory

Attitude Change Theory

Arousal Hypothesis

Proponent Tannebaum:

Exposure to television violence increases aggression because violence increases excitement or

"arouses" viewers

Both physiological arousal and level of behavior will vary depending on whether a film sequence ends on an exciting note or concludes with blander depictions

Social Learning Theory

Proponent: Bandura ' the most influential sources of research on television and aggression Ways of behaving are learned by observing others and a major means of acquiring unfamiliar behavior

Children can acquire aggressive ways of behaving from television and will exhibit these aggressive responses in play behavior

Disinhibition Hypothesis

Proponent: Berkowitz

Certain circumstances will result in increased interpersonal aggression because it weakens inhibitions against such behavior;

Circumstances:

where violence is rewarded;

where similar situations are in the current environment;

where the environment has a target

Aggression Reduction

Proponent Feshbach:

Under certain conditions exposure to television violence will reduce subsequent aggression

When television violence creates aggression anxiety which leads to the inhibition of aggressive impulses

Cognitive Processing

Cognitive Processing Psychology

Certain aggressive behaviors may be learned and stored in the brain for future reference
Placement of artificial images into our 'mind's eye by inducing alpha waves ('lypnotizing effect) with quick camera switches, rapid image movement, and computer generated morphing and other technical events.

Do large amounts of television viewing correlate with attention deficit disorder?

Attitude Change Theory

The more violent television the child watches, the more the child tends to have favorable attitudes toward aggressive behaviors:

become "immune" to the honor of violence

gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems imitate the violence they observe on television; and

identify with certain characters, victims and/or victimizers

Violence on Screens, Music, and

What we teach children about how to treat people and handle conflict

@ 125,000 youth under 18 were arrested for violent crimes in 1994

@ 805,000 youth under 18 were arrested for violent crimes in 1996

Is this linked to being more impulsive, more aggressive, and an inability to concentrate?

Being Hooked on the Media

Resembles the dependency symptoms of substance abuse:

Using TV as a sedative

Indiscriminate viewing

- Feeling loss of control while viewing
- Feeling angry with oneself for watching too much
- Inability to stop watching, and
- Feeling miserable when kept from watching

Viewing large amounts of TV violence does may not cause a child to act more violently,, but it can promote a view that violence is common place creating a heightened fear of being assaulted

- Perpetrators of violent acts go unpunished 73 percent of the time
- About 25 percent of violent acts involve handguns
- Only 4 percent show nonviolent alternatives to solve programs
- The negative consequences of violence are not portrayed

What Children Learn About Conflict Resolution: TV vs Life

- What children learn from TV
 - To see the problem causing the conflict is the other person's fault
 - To use only one solution - the violent one which often involves using weapons
- What "need" to learn from real life
 - To see the problem as a shared one and part: of an ongoing relationship
 - To look for many possible solutions and the words to try to explore than

What Children Learn About Conflict Resolution: TV vs. Life

- What children learn from TV
 - To have one winner and everyone else losing
 - To see violence as happening w/o consequences
 - To have the bad guys come back for more of the same next time Need to learn from real life
 - To choose a solution to try because everyone wins
 - To try agreed-on solution and experience consequences
 - To evaluate the solution and make it work better

Factors Which Increase Risk of Violent Behavior in Children

A complex interaction or combination of factors leads to an increased risk of violent behavior:

- Previous aggressive or violent behavior
- Being the victim of violence
- Exposure to violence in home/community
- Genetic factors
- Exposure to violence in the media
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Combination of stressful family socioeconomic factors

Warning Signs for Violent Behavior in Children

Children who have several risk factors and the show the following behaviors should e carefully evaluated:

- Intense anger
- Frequent loss of temper or blow-ups
- Extreme irritability
- Extreme impulsiveness
- Becoming easily frustrated

Children's Perceptions of Race and Class in the Media

Today's children will be the first generation to come of age in an America where racial minorities are the numeric majority.

Our future will depend upon children's ability to develop positive racial identities and an appreciation of diversity.

Children will need to expand their conception of race and race relations in ways their parent never knew,

Children's Perception of Race and Class in the Media

Young people think

It's important for children to see people of their own race on television. Children of color are most likely to think so.

White and African-American children say they see people of their race on television while Latino and Asian children are much less likely to see their race represented.

Across all races, children are more likely to associate positive characteristics with White characters and negative characteristics with minority characters:

having lots of money
being well-educated
being a leader doing well in school
being intelligent - was more associated with White characters on TV

breaking the law
having a hard time financially
being lazy
acting goofy - was more often associated with the Minority characters on television

Television Can No Longer be Considered a Casual Part of Daily Life

In a single day you catch a glimpse of a denuded rain forest, a beached whale, an oil-covered bird, a blackened middle-eastern sky, a glowing waste dump, a starving child, within seconds your mind is emblazoned with rapid-fire sequences of a new car high on a desert plateau, animated tooth paste and toilet-bowl cleaner, affluent looking yuppies playing volleyball on a beach drinking bottled water, and a public service announcement on STDs.

What Parents Can Do....

Help children see through violence by
WORK OUT LIMITS on the amount of TV viewing
SELECT quality, nonviolent programs
WATCH TV together
TALK about misleading lessons and harmful effects of violence in the media
DISCUSS better ways to solve conflicts
CHOOSE toys that promote creativity and are not linked to violent shows

What Parents Can Do..

Be proactive about family communication. Consciously schedule talking and listening time with your child
Consciously schedule talking and listening time with your child.
Provide opportunities so a child can share joys, fears, anger, or other feelings that puzzle them or confuse them