

Can watching tv
violence be harmful
to the mental health
of children?
assignment



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Aggression. Killing. Revenge. This sounds like the latest Scream movie, but it also describes the average Saturday morning cartoon. Haven't you noticed that the level of violence during Saturday morning cartoons is higher than the level of violence during prime time? Don't you think that showing violence is destructive and in no way helping to profit the upcoming generation and that acts of aggression in cartoons are harmful to children in many ways?

Or maybe viewing violence can be useful to instill values into children and we should profit from violence used as humour...? We can find many facts or evidences for each side, no matter what we think or feel. According to psychological research, violent media (including cartoons) affects children negatively. Effects may be long-lasting and noticeable in a person's further behaviour, even as an adult. It is proved that the violent occurrences displayed on TV cause desensitizing effects and makes youngsters less sensitive to pain and suffering of others.

It is not very surprising, seeing that an average American child (at the age of about 13) has watched over 100,000 acts of televised violence, including 8000 depictions of murder, which is especially damaging to young children (under 8), because they cannot easily tell the difference between real life and fantasy. Studies by George Gerbner, the University of Pennsylvania, proved that children's television shows contain about 20 violent acts each hour. They also showed that children who watch a lot of television are more likely to think that the world is a mean and dangerous place.

They become more fearful of the world around them, their fear of becoming victims in reality increases. The researchers noticed differences between children who watched the violent shows and those who watched non-violent ones. Children who watched the violent shows are more likely to argue, disobey authority and less willing to wait for things than the latter. Prior group of children became more aggressive towards others, so the conclusion is simple ??? media violence can really lead to aggressive behaviors.

On the other side, some people believe that there is no such thing as harmful effect of aggression on TV and violence shown in cartoons. They say that violence is an everyday element that is seen on many talkshows, sitcoms, even news without causing any violent attitudes - " Not everyone that watches violence or other issues brought about by television is going to become violent or dangerous to society". They are also convinced that it can be used as a funny element e. g. hen cartoon characters hit each other over the head with hammers and little birds or stars surround their head.

Personally, I disagree with such an opinion, because aggression used as humour fails to show its consequences. As a result, children learn that there are just few (if any!) repercussions for committing violent acts. The character is often not punished for the act or sometimes doesn't even get hurt when in real life he would be dead. That's very confusing for younger children.

There is only one advantage of watching " happy-violence" on TV I can find.

It serves a good way to bring up difficult topics such as sex, rape, drug abuse, murders, etc. It may open communication between children and

parents while watching it together is a perfect occasion to try to explain

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some particular rules, give moral instructions. Maybe viewing TV doesn't actually cause violence, but not discussing the issues seen or getting feedback from adults is more of a factor and parents need to be more involved in their children's lives.

At the end, we have to think if banning children from TV is an answer or if we should control what they watch and show the difference between fiction and real life. Yes, there are going to be some crazy people out there that will search television for inspiration, but overall, the right caring will have more of an effect on a child than what the child sees on TV. We need to help them make the right choices and discuss violent actions that occur on the screen and finally show alternative ways to solve problems.