

How do our kids so caught up in consumerism

[Family](#), [Children](#)



Young generations today at their early age are aware of the power of money. Television commercials have a lot to do with this as well as other forms of advertisements that are openly reorienting children, and attracting children to spend money for the product they are endorsing. In fact, many commercials on radio and television are often directed to seduce children's appetite, which are directly or indirectly molding them to become consumerist individuals. The Influence of Society among Children Indeed, society is consumed with material things and living a good life mentality. Society is teaching children that happiness and money are directly related. Alex Russell Piquero and Stephen G. Tibbetts (2002) noted the report of Messner and Rosenfeld (1994) citing that conceptualizations of the American Dream "have recently drawn attention to America's fetishism for money" (Piquero & Tibbetts, p. 152). Piquero and Tibbett argued that money is awarded special priority in American culture and is now "inextricably tied to the socialization of young children and adolescents, or, in their language, modern youth have been penetrated by economic motives and concerns" (Piquero & Tibbetts, p. 152).

Children's early realization of the value and power of money and access to it get kids being caught up in consumerism. Piquero and Tibbetts cited James Mcneal's book, which reported that over the last thirty years, kids between the ages of twelve to fourteen double their spending. In the 1990s youth spending was tripled. As of 1997, Mcneal reported that youth spending reached 23.4 billion dollars but if the older youths are included, youths twelve to nineteen years old had spent \$63 billion in 1994, but the figure

climbed to \$94 billion in 1998 (Piquero & Tibbetts, p. 153). The Negative Impact of Television advertisements on Children

Behind these huge spending of the youths, which certified their being consumerist, the question that remains to be answered is ' how do our kids so caught up in consumerism? ' Brian Swimme pointed out that kids are caught up in consumerism in gradual process through constant exposure in commercial advertisements on television. Brian noted a child will have drenched in 30, 000 advertisements before he or she even enters first grade. Swimme emphasized that the time spends by kids in absorbing advertisements is more than their entire years in high school, which are chiefly ignored by their parents.

Swimme noted that most parents believe that commercial ads are simply the effort corporations do to get viewers become interested of their product without really paying attention of its possible consequences on the children. Swimme's point is that these ads shaped the vulnerable mind of the children to become consumerist, making children dissatisfied with what they have and to crave for something. What really the children get from these ads is a world-view that is founded on dissatisfaction and cravings, which produce the virus of consumerism in them.

Swimme noted that no child can come out intact and has not absorbed the toxic of consumerism as advertisers used the best artistic talents and the most penetrating psychological techniques. In other words, brainpower, and social status combined with sophisticated electronic graphics, children become easy prey of these ads. According to Edward L. Palmer and Brian

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Young, the most common persuasive strategy employed in advertising to children is to associate the product with fun/happiness (Palmer & Young 2003, p. 292). Thus, advertisers contribute to such ill effects as childhood obesity and materialism.

Palmer and Young asserted that advertising can even negatively affect parent-child relationship as Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint of the Harvard Medical School stated, “advertisers also push the nag factor—for children to nag their parents to buy them certain things” (Palmer & Young, 2003, p. 301). An internet article entitled New American Dream noted that advertisers spent \$100 million in 1983 but today advertisers pour out \$15 billion annually for television ads designed to soak the entire child’s world, one hundred fifty times higher from 1983.

The article also noted that advertisers are determined to reach younger and younger viewers. The article quoted psychologist Allen Kanner stated that children’s age being targeted is rapidly dropping. It is about two years old now. Parents do not have time for their kids, in exchange; they generously provide their material needs. Everyone admits that the children getting so caught up in consumerism is not a healthy development yet in every corner of the child’s life, is being soaked with television ads that are molding the child’s life.

After learning all the things, the question is how can we prevent children from being so caught up in consumerism? Is there anything that we can do about this social stigma prying on our children? According to Ted Villaire, children become disheartened, lonely, and annoyed when their parents do

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not have time for them even they generously provide their material needs. In order to save children from the virus of consumerism, parents should realize that kids learn in homes, particularly from them. Parents should have quality time for their children and should be interested about how their kids are doing in school.

According to Meline M. Kevokian, to the little kids the words coming from his or her mother or father are comforting and calming. Kevorkian emphasized that parents should use this advantage to inculcate strong positive values among their children. They should initiate warm and intimate communication about everything and guides their children toward their teenage life. Parents should encourage their kids to talk about their feelings and let them feel how important they are. Parents should promote openness and honesty and commend them for doing so.

Conclusion It cannot be denied that the impact of Television Advertisements penetrates in every corner of the child's life and this impact is molding our children to become consumerist even at their young age. However, the problem cannot be attributed only to advertisers. Society and even the parents are also to be blame. Society's tolerance and acceptance of the consumerist culture is providing the children the ground for consumerism, while parent's inability to guide their children is pushing them to create a different value in life.

Likewise, the next generation will be a totally different culture; the would-be parents will follow the same pattern of values that they will pass on to their children not unless, people today will recognize the negative impact of

negligence of responsibility to these children. Consumerism benefits the business sector as well as the government but it has negative impact on the family. This has to be dealt with accordingly.

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