

# Impact of violence in movies and video games on children

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Impact of Violence in Movies and Video Games on Children Television and video games have become more violent in content. We have become desensitized to the graphic violence we are exposed to via television and video games. We have grown so use to viewing media with this type of content that it no longer phases us, and it almost seems normal. Violence can be found in everything from children's cartoons with violent humor to video games that encourage players to kill opponents to advance to the next level. Studies show that children exposed to violence may be more aggressive. When children view violence as a way to solve problems, it can lead to bullying and an irrational view of how to resolve conflict. Studies have also showed that children exposed to violence can experience anxiety and the perception that the world is an evil place. Expert's opinions Clearly there is no shortage of opinions on the impact of violent media on children. A report published by the surgeon general back in 2001 pointed to a steady increase in youth violence for a decade from 1983 to 1993 with a quote " The report found strong evidence that exposure to violence in the media can increase children's aggressive behavior in the short term and concluded: Research to date justifies sustained efforts to curb the adverse effects of media violence on youths." Surgeon General, 2001, p. 87). 10 years later, the issue and supporting studies have only increased. As one would expect there is an unbalance between information and studies available to compare with the negative impact side acquiring an overwhelming majority. Schneider Family Services Company director, Gina Simmons, states that a 1999 national study reported that an average American child spends 40 hours per week viewing various forms of media like TV, media, and video games. When

these children complete elementary school this equates to them having seen 8, 000 murders and 100, 000 other acts of various violence. In addition Simmons references a July 2000 joint statement of six professional associations that concur there are more than 1, 000 studies connecting media violence and aggression in children (Simmons, 2008, p. 1). Although Craig A. Anderson, a media violence researcher and a chair of Iowa State University's Department of Psychology agrees that the abundance of violent video games tend to have negative effects on children's behavior and states that " It's Society, not science, that must decide how to deal with the negative effects of violent video games." In contrast he also recognizes some positive influences from today's video games. Anderson recognizes that most interactive games now require and include complex problem-solving skills. As well as referencing a flight simulator game he bought his son, which allowed him to develop skills used in NASA summer camp that amazed the camps staff (Hoerrner & Hoerrner, 2006). Analyzing and Contrasting From the surgeon general noting increases in violence among youth in the late 80s and 90s to a plethora of new studies supporting the same or similar evidence, one may be concerned with the bias that appears to exist primarily on the negative side of the issue. While analyzing deeper, and when looking through one filter, the focus on negativity toward children and media delves deeper. When the 1999 study above is mentioned, the numbers are shocking. The study showed that children spend 40 hours during the week on different forms of media; notably violence, but one has to question if the study would have equated for the abundance of media in society today, and how much media in our lives has skyrocketed. The study not only assumed

the viewing amounts within a child's entire elementary cycle but also assumes how many hours of violence a child would likely watch. The reference to one thousand studies on the subject shows how clearly the issue is of concern to parents, teachers, and the future of behavioral condition society may have to deal with. What research has limited itself with is discovering the potential positive effects of video games, and violence in media and television. The expert views above indicate Craig A. Anderson may be suggesting strongly that violent media content negatively effects children, but he also points out that items such as interactive games, for instance, do illicit requirements for complex problem-solving skills. These skill types of skills and experiences can be referenced and reflected along with different areas being discussed. Comparing and contrasting the positives and negatives proves to be a harder task when it comes to discovering the positives, but there is a one likely reason. Media pressures developed by existing conditions in society likely form bias's, which leaves little room for fair, reasonable, and mediated conditions or conclusions for evidence to be properly put forth on either side of the argument. Discovering the positives resides in the logic of today's children. Children are developing complex problem solving skill sets far beyond those their parents did at the same ages and at faster rates. Studies must reflect the times, and not the basis of the past. Our Opinion Violent movies and video games do have some type of impact on children, but we do not think that it will cause the child to inflict violence on others. We believe that if left alone without proper supervision and guidance, it will have a negative effect. Growing up in a household with family values and ethics will allow the child to have a better

understanding of what he or she does and to know the difference between what is real and what is fictitious. Let us focus on the fact that when we were children, we would watch cartoons in which one of the characters would chase the other around with a shotgun, light a stick of dynamite, and place it under their hat. The character would then fall off a cliff, followed by a giant boulder on the head. In addition playing war games as young boys with the green Army men and simulating an explosion was quite exciting. Blowing the Army men up with firecrackers were all a part of the violent games we played. Shooting a BB gun or slingshot was also another way in which we enjoyed playing in the days before video games. The point we are trying to make is, violence has always been around and most people recognize the difference, and would not go out and inflict violence in the real world. A few mentally disturbed children may not know the difference in between the two, or children who were not taught the difference between reality and make-believe by their parents at an early age. We blame playing too many video games and watching too many movies as a cause of obesity in children, but we also parallel behavioral issues to the same mediums, which are why we should focus more on how children are raised rather than the influential mediums they are faced with. The Impact on Children Though the point may be argued that violence in video games and movies has no effect on children, it is hard to imagine how such imagery cannot influence their actions. Modern video games — with their almost real looking graphics, in-depth story lines, and characters that resemble real people — are quickly approaching the realm of “ virtual reality. ” Gone are the days of Mario and Luigi saving the world and the Princess from the evil Bowser as in Super

Mario Bros. Video games that are more recent involve stories that require automobile theft, use of illegal weapons, and violent fighting tactics to advance to the next level. These images paint the picture that in order to get what you want in life, you have to take it by force. According to a study done by the Gallup Company in 2003, " More than 70 percent of American teenage boys have played the violent but popular " Grand Theft Auto" video games, and they are more likely to have been in a fight than those who have not played" (Berkowitz, 2003). This study seems to provide clear evidence that some children's real life is influenced by the video games they play at home. Young children are very impressionable and can easily gain a distorted view of reality by participating in these games. (Berkowitz, in press) Certain movies are also influencing the actions and behaviors of young children. Parental guide rating systems have been put in place as advisories, though many parents completely ignore them. If a child wants ideas on how to rob a casino, fight, mistreat women, and/or blow something up, all he or she needs to do is visit the local theater. Better yet, the Internet and media companies like Netflix allow children to watch these scenes without leaving their homes. I remember watching " The Karate Kid" and realizing that martial arts are a means of self-defense and a practice in self-control and honesty. Hollywood's modern twist makes gun-slinging bandits out to be more hero like and less villain like. The images that these children are seeing on the big screen has the potential to fill their heads with the idea that violence is a useful means to solve ones problems or get what he or she wants. Conclusion Violence is prevalent on television and in video games. The amount of violence children are exposed to via the media has increased.

Cartoons feature slapstick characters that use vulgarity and violence as a form of humor. Video games feature graphic war scenarios or bloody street fights that encourage players to kill opponents in order to move to the next level of the game. Studies show children tend to mimic violent behavior when it comes to conflict resolution. The exposure to violence has had an affect on children. The effects range from aggression to various levels of anxiety. The constant exposure to violence often perpetuates that the world is an unsafe place full of mean people. References Berkowitz, B. (in press). Most teens play violent video games, study says. The Washington Post. Retrieved August 15, 2011, from [www.lionlamb.org/news\\_articles/Washington\\_Post\\_Grand\\_Theft.htm](http://www.lionlamb.org/news_articles/Washington_Post_Grand_Theft.htm) Hoerrner, M., & Hoerrner, K. (2006). Video Game Violence (vol. 15 ed.). : Child Welfare League of Amreica. Simmons, G. (2008). Does Violent Media Cause Aggression?. Retrieved August 15, 2011, from [www.manageangerdaily.com](http://www.manageangerdaily.com) Surgeon General (2001). Youth Violence. Retrieved August 15, 2011, from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/>