

Impacts of the media on children



The Media Impacts Children

Today's children and adolescents are surrounded and immersed in both traditional and new forms of digital media. The world is becoming a "global village," strongly influenced by the media. There are a couple forms of media. Mass media is communication whether written, broadcast, or spoken that reaches a large audience. On the other hand, social media is a form of electronic communication where users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. In Yolanda Reid Chassiakos and others' article "Children and Adolescents and Digital Media" it is stated, "At present, approximately three-quarters of teenagers own a smartphone, 24% of adolescents describe themselves as "constantly connected" to the internet and 50% report feeling "addicted" to their phones." The world is quite literally at their fingertips. People can publish whatever they want. Fake news websites are broadly common, publishing lies and fabricated news. Media has a negative impact on children's values and opinions because it shows unrealistic body expectations, creates addiction, and makes everything commercialized. This topic can be argued and stated, but what can people do to reduce the negative influence on children and adolescents? In order to decrease the negative influence the media has on children they must learn the difference between reality and the media, children need to watch less TV, and families need to show alternatives to the media.

One possible solution to reduce the negative impact media has on children is for parents to let their children understand the difference between reality and what the media shows as reality. The world is full of perfect people

today with perfect skin, body, and hair, at least that is what it appears like to people today. Thanks to Photoshop, the standard of beauty has become impossible to achieve. And these images are everywhere. This has led to false body images among many children, teenagers, and adults. Body image is how someone feels about their body, but their opinions of their own bodies are influenced by what the media shows the world as normal and healthy. Young adolescents are especially vulnerable to advertising. Young teens must learn not everything they hear or see is true. Children need to know the TV show or movie they see, the radio station or music they listen to, and the magazine they read may have a bias point of view and show unrealistic images. Parents should talk with them about how the media can promote certain ideas or beliefs. This is not the best solution because no matter how many times someone says that it is not real children and teens still see the pictures and advertisements that make them think otherwise. There is no absolute way of avoiding it. Billboards, social media sites, television, and magazines in the aisles of grocery stores; it is everywhere.

Another solution is to limit the amount of time children spend viewing television. According to Jefferey Johnson and others in their article “Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior During Adolescence and Adulthood” it is stated, “Television viewing and aggressive behavior were assessed over a 17-year interval in a community sample of 707 individuals. There was a significant association between the amount of time spent watching television during adolescence and early adulthood and the likelihood of subsequent aggressive acts against others.” Television has been used as an “electronic babysitter” for decades. However, some parents

make TV viewing off-limits during the school week, except for special programs that are agreed to ahead of time. This solution is not the best either because it is impossible to protect children entirely from the media and banning TV entirely may only strengthen its appeal to them. Television used to be a main source of news and entertainment, but in today's day and age everything is in a smartphone; right at their fingertips and it does not help when parents use smartphones as the new "electronic babysitter."

The best solution is to model alternative forms of entertainment. A young child or teen whose parent is constantly in front of the TV or checking their email over a quick dinner is being sent a clear-cut message. Parents who turn off the TV or computer and engage in conversation, sports, games or other activities are showing alternatives to their children. In the article titled "Impact of Media Use on Children and Youth" by the Canadian Paediatric Society it is stated, "Studies show that parents play an important role in their children's social learning, but if a parent's views are not discussed explicitly with children, the medium may teach and influence by default." Although a single exposure to a particular message is not likely to change someone's opinion on any particular topic, continued exposure to media messages will help shape points of view over time. Influential media messages are more easily absorbed by our subconscious thought. Most people don't want to fall out of the mainstream and so they will make decisions that are accepted by society, a society that is influenced on a mass scale by the media.

Some people may argue, reducing the amount of media young children and adolescents are exposed to could reduce the healthy impacts the media has.

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These benefits largely depend on a child's age and developmental stage, a child's characteristics, how the media is used such as with a parent or without, and the media content and design. Educational TV shows, new ways to connect with people, and awareness development of world issues are positive impacts, but there are dangers with connecting with new people over the internet and fake news is a very common thing today. “

Recommendations to discourage media exposure for children younger than 2 years were based on research on TV and videos, which showed that in-person interactions with parents are much more effective than video for learning of new verbal or nonverbal problem-solving skills” (Reid Chassiakos et al.). Most would agree that mass media is a permanent part of modern culture and has become more widespread and accessible, but there is a world around the screen and it is better to teach that at a young age.

In conclusion, children and teen's opinions and values are shaped by the media. People are valuing followers and likes over real life experiences. Their opinion of themselves is influenced by what the media shows as normal. The need for validation and the fear of missing out creates addiction. Everything is commercialized; convincing people they need a product to be happy when supposedly money cannot buy happiness. Children must understand reality versus the media and watch less television. Parents need to model the other forms of entertainment. The media is not going to go away, but the amount of reliability children and adults have on it can change.

Annotated Bibliography

Canadian Paediatric Society. “ Impact of Media Use on Children and Youth.”

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Paediatrics & Child Health , vol. 8, no. , 2003, pp. 301-17, www. ncbi. nlm. nih. gov

/pmc/articles/PMC2792691/.

The Canadian Pediatric Society explains the impact of media use on, specifically, children and youth. This article explores the beneficial and harmful effects of media on children’s mental and physical health, and it identifies how physicians can counsel patients and their families to promote healthy use of the media in their communities. The authors include many helpful statistics with other cited sources included.

Reid Chassiakos, Yolanda (Linda), et al. “ Children and Adolescents and Digital Media.”

Pediatrics , vol. 138, no. 5, 21 Oct. 2016, p. e20162593, 10. 1542/peds. 2016-2593, pediatrics. aapublications. org/content/138/5/e20162593.

The authors from the Council on Communications and Media explain the impact of technology and media. The authors speak on the traditional media versus digital media. They use statistics on when children start using forms of media. They also describe the forms of media and their impact on the viewers. The research evidence suggests that newer media offers both benefits and risks to the health of children and teenagers. The negative impacts include effects on sleep, attention, and learning; a higher rate of obesity and depression; exposure to inaccurate or inappropriate content; and compromised privacy. The benefits include early learning, exposure to new ideas and knowledge, more opportunities for social contact and support, and

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opportunities to access health promotion information. This article shows both sides well with credible statistics to back up the main argument.

Johnson, Jeffrey G, et al. “ Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence

and Adulthood.” *Science (New York, N. Y.)* , vol. 295, no. 5564, 2002, pp. 2468–71, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11923542, 10. 1126/science.1062929. Accessed 24 Sept. 2019.

The authors of the article titled “Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence and Adulthood” explain the impact that television has on children. They provide statistics involving the amount of television viewed and the amount of aggressive behavior that comes along with it. The article also provides other factors that impact a child’s aggressive behavior that adds on to the television viewing.