

Juvenile crime and the influence of media violence assignment



Juvenile Crime and the Influence of Media Violence With several arguments for both sides can we truly determine if there is only one main role in juvenile crime? There are many statistics that show there is a higher aggression level formed in people who watched a great deal of violent television or played violent video games as a child. People must begin to consider that there are several contributors to youth crime and violence. Youth crime is often fueled by media violence and can depend on how a person is raised and the adult influence that, while growing up, surrounds them.

Youth crime is far to present in the current generation. There are children harming each other at school and harming their families at home and unfortunately it is far too difficult to pin point only one cause for this violence that we can get under control. In a report for parents and policy makers (Children.. 1999) there are statistics stating the influence of media violence and the barring that it has on juveniles. There are statistics showing that in 1997 alone there were approximately 2. 8 million juveniles arrested (Children 1999). Of the 2. million, 2, 500 were arrested for murder, 121, 000 were arrested for other violent crimes, and the remainders of that number were arrested for lesser crimes that are unknown (Children 1999). In 1997 youth arrests accounted for 19% of all arrests, 14% of murder arrests, and 17% of all violent crime arrests (Children 1999). According to statistic reports from the Department of Justice youth arrests increased by 49% between the years of 1988 and 1997 (Children 1999). In 1999 there was a survey done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that showed with in the 30 days before the survey was done 5. % of students had carried a hand gun to

school, 18% of high school students admitted to currently carrying a knife, razor, firearm, or other weapon on a regular basis, and 9% of them take a weapon to school. At this time there was also a Committee report done that showed more than 87% of American households had a television in the home; almost 50% of children had televisions in their rooms; 88.7% of homes with children have home video game equipment, a personal computer, or both. This report also showed that the average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of rock music between the 7th and 12th grades (Children 1999).

As stated in Children, Violence and the Media (1999) it was shown that by the age of 18 years old, on average will have already seen more than 16,000 stimulated murders and over 200,000 random acts of violence. These statistics can all help to prove that violence in the media has a profound impact on our youth (Children 1999). In 1999 we were able to prove that media violence could account for influencing approximately 10% of juvenile crime and arrests (Children 1999). The graph above shows the age of serious criminal offenders as perceived by the victims of the incidents.

In this graph it is expressed that the criminal offenses that victims perceived to be performed by juveniles has actually fluctuated frequently and decreased over the years (Bureau 2006). The two above charts come from statistics found in Colorado. The first of the two shows that in fact with this study the total arrest rate among juveniles has decreased by 32.4% between 1997 and 2006. In the second chart it shows the juvenile arrests by category with results showing that the majority of crimes committed by juveniles were alcohol or drug related as well as other unknown offenses.

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The lowest of the numbers appears to show criminal acts against another person (Compass 2008). In a study done by The New Citizen (1992) there were several statistics that connected television violence to juvenile crime. In 1960 Prof. Leonard D. Eron who represents the American Psychological Association began a study on 875 children, ages 8 and 9. Eron later performed follow up researches in 1970 and 1982 that shared results with the original research done.

In one of the findings that were done in 1970 it showed that there was a direct correlation between violent television viewing at approximately age 8 and an elevated aggression level when the subject is age 19. There were also studies done that showed that boys with an originally low level of aggression who watched excessive violent television were more aggressive later in life than boys who originally had a higher level of aggression but did not watch violent television at the younger age (Citizen 1992). These findings also showed that different variables such as IQ, social status, social mobility, parents aggressiveness, etc. did not have as vast of a bearing on the results as media violence. One thing that did show a relation is that when children have a lower social status they will often watch more television than others may and this could lead to viewing more violent television (Citizen 1992). There has been extensive research done by credible sources showing that media violence shows direct evidence of having a very negative effect on aggression as well as behaviors that turn violent in both the long term and short term contexts (Anderson et. al. 2003). Of all of the research done on media violence and juvenile crime it is most evident that television and film thus far have the greatest effect. Music and video games are growing in

relation to juvenile violence as well (Anderson, et. al. , 2003). While it appears to be true that media violence has had a huge impact on the increase of youth violence over the years, people do not often take into account the other factors in a child's life. One other huge influence on youth violence is the way that he or she is parented.

Often times history repeats itself and if parents are violent or troublesome then it is very likely that children who might see these things will follow in the parents footsteps. Going back to media violence having an influence on youth crime, there are several circumstances where parents who are very busy or when children are older they will use the television almost as a babysitter. Other influencers to youth crime are peer influence and what they see on the streets. Children can pick up on different behaviors among their friends and what they see around themselves outside of the home.

Thinking about all of the different influencers on youth crime, it appears that there is one major influence, the parents. Parents have the ability to restrict television or even keep it out of the home, as well as parents have the ability to influence good choices in life, relationships and friendships. Therefore, if parents would take a more conscious approach at preventing negative behavior before problems arise then there could be less damage control in the future. After looking over all of the evidence that media violence has such a great relation to juvenile crime it is hard to debate the results.

Everyone as a generation should take a look at what needs to be done and what can help to change for the generations to follow. Far too often television is used as a distraction technique with children. People are

continuing to be more liberal with what they allow their children to watch and not recognizing the results that may come from unintentional violence. There are far too many television shows or movies that are directed to the younger generation and include violence or "self defense" strategies that are unnecessary for young people to see.

We as a country need to be more aware of what is going on around us and take a step back from all of the violence that is portrayed in the world today.

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