READING



Can Violent Movies or TV Programs Harm Children?

A number of scientific studies have reported that watching violence can make children more aggressive. According to the research, two kinds of programs and movies encourage aggressive behavior in young children more than others: (1) realistic violent action programs and movies and (2) violent cartoons.

One disturbing conclusion is that the effects of violent viewing last for many years. One study showed that children who watched violent TV programs when they were 8 years old were more likely to behave aggressively at age 18. Furthermore, as adults they were more likely to be convicted of violent crimes, such as child abuse and murder.

Studies have also demonstrated that watching violent movies and TV shows can affect children's attitudes towards violence in the world around them. Children who watch a lot of violence become less sensitive to it in the real world. If children find violence normal, they may accept more violence in society or even commit violent acts themselves.

Very often, characters in movies and on television who commit violent crimes are not sorry for their actions and don't face consequences or punishment. When children see fictional characters like these, they learn that doing bad things is OK. For children, who are growing and developing, this is a bad message.

So what can we do? With young children, we have the power to control the TV programs and movies they watch, so we can protect them from seeing any violence at all. However, with older children it's impossible to completely prevent their exposure to violence. But we can try to limit the number of hours they spend watching it. And when children have seen a violent film or TV show, it's important to discuss it with them, to help them understand that violence is not a normal part of life.

Information source: education.pitt.edu

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A Confirm content Discuss the following questions, using the information in the article. Then share your answers with the class.

1. Research has found that TV and movie violence can hurt children. What are some ways that viewing violence can affect children?
2. What kinds of programs and movies are most harmful?
3. Some studies show that viewing violence can have long-term effects, lasting for many years. What are some of the effects that studies have shown?
4. What bad "message" can come from violent programs and movies?
5. What suggestions does the article make to help parents prevent the bad effects of violent TV programs and movies in very young children? In older children?

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