

Chapter 4

Media Consuming in Children: Child Development, Babyhood (0–2), Early Childhood, Interests

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ABSTRACT

Media consumption is a term in “sociology” that describes the individuals that organize information on the basis of the use of produced goods, rather than on the axis of services and production. Mediums that fall under the scope of media consumption include radio, television, computer, mobile phones, newspaper, and magazine formats. The usage patterns and applications of these tools are internet, music, movies, games, etc. Among children between the ages of 5 and 8, those who do not use computers represent a small percentage of 10%. Even within this age group, a large majority know how to use computers. More than half of children under the age of 8 have played games and watched videos at least once via a smartphone, iPod, iPad or similar device. According to a US study, children spend about 9 hours a day on the screen. Besides this, despite all the options, listening to music and watching television for children and young people continue to be a favorite activity. This paper further explores the impact of media consumption on children’s development.

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INTRODUCTION

Child Development

Development is the process that takes place within integrity. Differences in physical, emotional and social aspects are a method of choice for a more detailed analysis. In order to make right decisions about the child, detailed information about him or her is needed. Their talent, success, interests, social and emotional maturity and intentions are the dimensions which give clues about this issue. From the historical point of view of the child's development, it is seen that, from the antiquity to date, the behaviour of the parents towards the child is not very positive. The fact revealed by the historical sources of civilization is that direct and indirect behaviours towards the child are classified from distant, rigid, sloppy and ordinary behaviours towards a structure that could express and fulfill the wishes and expectations and that is tried to be gradually understood and which is believed to have rights (Yavuzer, 1993).

In terms of development dimensions; developmental integrity is mentioned in terms of cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor perspectives. Developmental periods include cross-sectional review methods that make it easier for us to see physical and psychological changes that depend on age. Based on the fact that the child's reactions and behaviors differ according to age, their attitudes (tendencies) can be analyzed. It has to be seen that adult behaviors and child behaviors differ from each other and child behaviours in itself differ according to age categories (Yükselen & Turan, 2015:12).

It is important to understand how children normally develop so as to comprehend children's media use and choices. In this context, assumptions about important developmental characteristics of the four childhood periods (infant and newborn infants, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence) and about how these characteristics affect the children's media use and choices are formed (Beentjes, Koolstra, Marseille, & van der Voort, 2001; Szybist, 2011).

Babyhood (0-2)

Babyhood includes children from birth to age of two. In the first two years of their lives, they start to act more meaningfully. Although they start to learn almost 20 new words per week in this period, babies and toddlers have limited language skills (Bukatko, 2007), and vocabulary and language skills correspondingly develop. At this point, they like to express the names of familiar objects (ship, house, train) and known creatures (dogs, cats) they meet in a story book or audiovisual media. On the basis of these behaviors, it can be said that there is a proximodistal learning principle. Apart from stimuli in the environment, mobile communication tools together with visual media elements play an active role in the identification of objects. The child can speed up the process of making sense of the environment through the media. However, media use for this age group is a highly controversial issue.

In the late 1990s, the media about babyhood period has become a very large and international industry (Christakis, 2009); and in general, many health professionals argue that they do not yet have enough information about the (potentially negative) impact of media on this audience. This and similar concerns have led to the creation of public policy initiatives. For example, while in the United States, the American Academy of Pediatrics did not approve watching television in the first two years of life (Communication and Media Council, 2011), France took a step to ban programs targeting babies. In children-media relationship, children can be harmed when exposed to intense television impact.

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