

Television causes an increase in violence in children.

Yes

There has been overwhelming evidence that suggests viewing violent and aggressive behavior on television, does indeed directly affect children. Children are great imitators. Imaginary play and modeling their favorite characters are commonplace among the young. Children can and readily do imitate what they see. Just ask any parent whose child has learned their ABC's by watching Sesame Street. They will all tell you that their child watched Big Bird, Ernie and the other characters reciting the alphabet over and over. After repeated viewing, their child began reciting their ABCs from memory. This act alone reinforces the idea that through imitation and repeated exposure children can learn. Learning violence is no exception. It can be imitated and learned in the same manner as how the alphabet was committed to memory. The only difference is when children watch negative behavior, it is that negativity that they learn and mimic. It is not something as harmless as the ABCs. Authorities on child behavior agree that what a child watches do indeed affect their behavior. According to The American Academy of Child and Adolescence Psychiatry, "Extensive viewing of television violence by children causes greater aggressiveness." Young children see violence on television and they have a difficult time differentiating between what is real or what is make believe, thus they imitate all that they see equally. Studies show that children who watch too much violence on TV appear to be more unwilling to cooperate and are less patient with both their peers and adults. When one person was asked if TV taught violence to children, a high school student responded, "When I was little, society was simpler, but now my little brother is hitting and cursing at the age of six. This doesn't happen in my house, but everyone knows where he gets it from. The TV!"

Of course, not

Violent television does not lead to violent children. Virtually everyone in our society watches television, yet we don't have rampant violent crime rates. Violent crime rates have actually dropped over time. Violence has existed long before the media and although the scope of it has changed, the causes cannot be attributed to media. Humans have been here long before television was invented and violence still happened then. Suggesting that violence would be virtually nonexistent if we had no media entertainment completely negates the witness of human history which is filled with violence. Research shows that some children are more aggressive in general than others and that the more aggressive children prefer violent television, watch and play more aggressive games, and act more aggressively themselves. In other words, their viewing choices are driven by their personalities

not the other way around. “All babies are born with violent tendencies, which most kids learn to control as they grow older,” says Richard Tremblay, a University of Montreal professor who has spent more than 20 years studying 35,000 Canadian children. “Those who don’t or can’t learn are the ones who become violent. It’s a natural behavior. It’s surprising that the idea that children and adolescents learn aggression from the media is still relevant.”