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PARENTAL TELEVISION MONITORING AND CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA M.S. 1983

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PARENTAL TELEVISION MONITORING AND CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

by

Barbara L. Maack

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

COLLEGE OF NURSING

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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Professor of Nursing

Date

DEDICATION

Dedicated To

Ralph Walter Maack

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental television monitoring and children's aggressive behavior. Sample size was 31 children.

A parental questionnaire was completed to ascertain parental television monitoring efforts, the child's television habits and viewing experiences, and demographic data. Children were observed during play after an incident of behavioral aggression, and acts of aggression were recorded on a checklist.

Overall, parental monitoring efforts were high and were characterized by explaining programs and determining viewing time. Data analyses suggest that parental monitoring may make a difference in both the mean number of acts and the frequency of occurrence of acts of behavioral aggression of the children. Television viewing was high; little difference in viewing patterns and no difference in program preference were found across groups; cartoons were the "most watched" genre of show. The favorite programs were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Michael B. Rothenberg, a pediatrician, writing in the Journal of the American Medical Association (1975), expressed concern about the welfare of children in regard to the impact of viewing violent programs on television. The same year, an editorial commentary in Pediatrics pleads for a more active role on the part of parents and health workers in "attacking the source of the problem by helping to upgrade the quality of children's programming" (Feinbloom 1975, p. 303). In April 1976 the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. Franz Ingelfinger, stated, "shall we medicals and our spouses and friends sit back, as we have been doing, and fold our hands over contented bellies, while the after dinner entertainment of our children shows nothing can be accomplished in the world without brass knuckles, kicks in the groin, switchblades or Saturday night specials?" (p. 837). An American Academy of Pediatrics opinion survey was conducted in 1978 on T.V. Program Policy. One pediatrician respondent stated, "I am pleased to see the Academy's growing interest in this area. It's now my practice to ask parents at all 'well-checks' about their children's T.V. habits (Bruyn 1978, p. 475).

Nurses, in particular, should become more knowledgeable about the extent, manifestations, and possible consequences of the violence and aggression shown on television and what measures can be taken to reduce any harmful effects. The investigator suggests this not only because of the nurse's role as an influential citizen, but because of her unique professional role in the lives of her patients, their families and children.

Television is quite properly becoming recognized as a major agent of socialization, on a par with family, school, and peers. It has become an unavoidable and unremitting factor in shaping what we are and what we will become. Research examining the impact of television and aimed at increasing any positive and reducing any harmful effects is essential. Aggression is a learned behavior, beginning very early in life and learned very well. But, because it is a behavior that is learned, it can be unlearned. To reduce the level of aggression in our society, it is necessary that we intervene early in the socialization of children so that they can learn alternative ways of solving problems and do not have to resort to aggressive techniques to attain their goals.

To discover whether the widely held impression of America as a violent society is justified, Stark and McEvoy (1970) designed and analyzed a survey, conducted for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, by Louis Harris and Associates in 1968. The poll consisted

of 1,176 interviews with a representative national sample of adult Americans. The results of the interpersonal violence portion of the survey show that almost 13 percent of all Americans have, as adults, been slapped or kicked by other persons; about one in eight of us, has, as an adult, punched or beaten another person or has been punched; among men this figure becomes one in five; one-fifth of all Americans approve of slapping one's spouse on appropriate occasions; one out of every twelve adults has been victimized by knives and one out of every seventeen adults has been victimized by a gun. One expert on family violence has concluded that "the United States is a country that practices and approves violence" (Strauss 1974, p. 53). Confirmation of the practice of violence comes from crime statistics indicating that the rate of murder occurs with ten times greater frequency in this country than in Great Britain (Kelley 1973, Geis and Monahan 1975) and rates of assault and battery exceed those of Canada by a factor of almost five (Parke and Collmer 1975, Steinmetz 1974a). Compared to other Western nations, the level of violence in America is high.

Cross-cultural comparisons of the level of television violence indicate that the United States is, again, higher than other countries such as Sweden, Israel, or Britain (Liebert, Neale, and Davidson 1973). Careful content analysis of American television programs over a 13-year period document the frequency with which violence is displayed. In 1979, 92

percent of all programs broadcast during weekend children's daytime viewing contained some violence. In general, 70 percent of programs monitored contained some violence and nearly 75 percent of all leading characters were involved in violence (Gerbner et al. 1980). It has been estimated that by the age of 18, a typical teenager has, in the course of watching television, seen some 13,000 killings and more than 101,000 violent episodes (Somers 1976). These findings provide support for Strauss's contention that violence is approved in this country. There is a consistently presented moral lesson that adults and children are repeatedly exposed to, i.e., violence is an appropriate means for resolving interpersonal conflict. Many professionals believe, as Anna Freud stated, that the children of our country are developing a dangerous tolerance for and acceptance of violence, aggression and destruction as a means toward achieving desired ends (N.Y. Times 1967).

Stein and Freidrich (1975) summarized the effects of exposure to violent television content: both behavior and attitudes are shaped by this type of television programming. According to Daven, et al. (1976), the young child may repeat what is seen on a particular program (imitation effect). In the words of Walt Whitman:

> -there was a child went forth everyday,
> -and the first object he looked upon, that object he became,

> -and that object became part of him for the day or
> a certain part of the day
> -or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
> (Leaves of Grass 1909, p.341)

Incidents have been reported in the literature - isolated and sporadic, but nonetheless disturbing - that seem to bear out concern about imitative behavior. In 1973, a gang of children in Boston set fire to a man after seeing a similar act on a film shown on television ('Fuzz') two nights before; the mother of a young girl claimed her daughter was raped by teenagers who had seen and imitated a rape scene on a 1974 television movie, 'Born Innocent'; a fifteen-year-old Miami youth shot his 82-year-old neighbor because of what he saw on 'Kojak' in 1977. A study of 100 juvenile offenders, commissioned by the American Broadcasting Corporation, found that no fewer than 22 confessed to having copied criminal techniques from television (Newsweek 21 Feb. 1977).

On the basis of A.C. Nielsen index figures, from age 2 to 18, the average American spends over 20,000 hours in front of the television (Family Weekly July 19, 1981). Common sense tells us that such a major investment of the child's time and attention must have some formative and instructional impact. As an information source, television has a high degree of credibility to the undiscriminating eye of the child. Former Federal Communications Commission Commissioner, Nicholas Johnson, has stated, "all television is

educational. The question is, what is it teaching?" (Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg 1977, p. 101).

Parents who watch television with their child and clarify, interpret, and evaluate what is shown can mediate the program's messages (Grusec 1973, Hicks 1968, O'Bryant and Corder-Bolz 1978). Concurrent commentary has been shown to effectively alter children's attitude toward and understanding of non-deviant social role behavior (Walling 1976). In one of the few experiments to assess the effect of adult mediation (commentary) on the impact of televised violence using a non-laboratory setting and behavioral measures, Horton and Santogrossi (1978) found that communications of either censorious or non-aggressive nature effectively decreased subjects' latency in summoning help (responsible adult assistance) when viewing "real-life" aggression.

In the words of Plato:

> And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive in their minds' ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown?
> (The Republic, Book II, p. 174)

The problem of the effects of such "casual tales" on children has assumed great importance in this time of the mass media of communication. With respect to mediation, concerned parents now might answer with "what we <u>allow</u> it to teach."

Dr. Robert M. Liebert, a psychologist and principal investigator for the Surgeon General's report on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, says: "the more violence and aggression a youngster sees on televsion, regardless of his age, sex or social background, the more aggressive he is likely to be in his own attitudes and behavior. The effects are not limited to youngsters who are in some way abnormal, but rather were found for large numbers of perfectly normal American children" (Hickey 1975, p. 10). Liebert added that one significant study showed that "it was not a boy's home life, not his school performance, not his family background, but the amount of television violence he viewed at age 9 which was the single most important determinant of how aggressive he was 10 years later, at age 19" (Hickey 1975, p. 10).

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, headed by Dr. Milton Eisenhower, concluded that "Violence on television encourages violent forms of behavior, and fosters moral and social values about violence in daily life which are unacceptable in a civilized society" (Hickey 1975, p. 11).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this investigation was to study the relationship of parental television monitoring and children's aggressive behavior. Four specific questions for the study were:

1. What are the amount and characteristics of parental monitoring effort for television viewing of preschool children?
2. What is the patterning of aggressive behavior of preschool children?
3. What are the similarities and the differences in "expressed" behavioral acts of aggression, between children, when parents have monitored their television viewing and when they have not?
4. What are the television habits and experiences of preschool children?

Purpose of the Study

Because of the range and extent of aggression and violence in our society (child abuse, assaults, crime in the streets, police brutality, campus disorders, urban riots, assassinations, and war), it is imperative that health professionals, especially nurses, become more knowledgeable about aggression in the critically important childhood years when the application of knowledge may aid in preventing or diminishing unhealthy aggression later.

Nurses and physicians may be the only helping professionals that a child with aggression problems encounters between birth and school entry at age 5 or 6, by which time the behavioral aggression may be quite extensive. Aggressive behavior is one aspect of the socialization process which is

an object of concern to both parents and to the professionals who work with children. It was one of the most frequent behavioral problems for which children were referred to out-patient clinics (Patterson 1956). A study of the frequency of aggressive behavioral symptoms in a population of 1,753 normal school children in kindergarten through second grade showed that 15-20 percent of the boys and 5-10 percent of the girls showed aggressive behavior regarded as excessive (Werry 1971).

There is a need for increased awareness on the part of parents of the possible adverse effects of television on the preschool-aged child. A concentrated effort needs to be made by parents on behalf of their children to monitor their television viewing.

Nurses can play an important role in parent education and anticipatory guidance to parents of preschool-aged children. Beyond this, nurses have a responsibility, along with other health care professionals, to share our knowledge of child developement and the special needs of children with the public and to participate in public dialogues on television as a psychosocial issue.

Conceptual Orientation

To examine the relationship of television monitoring by parents on childhood aggression, the conceptual orientation focused on aggression, social learning theory, and the

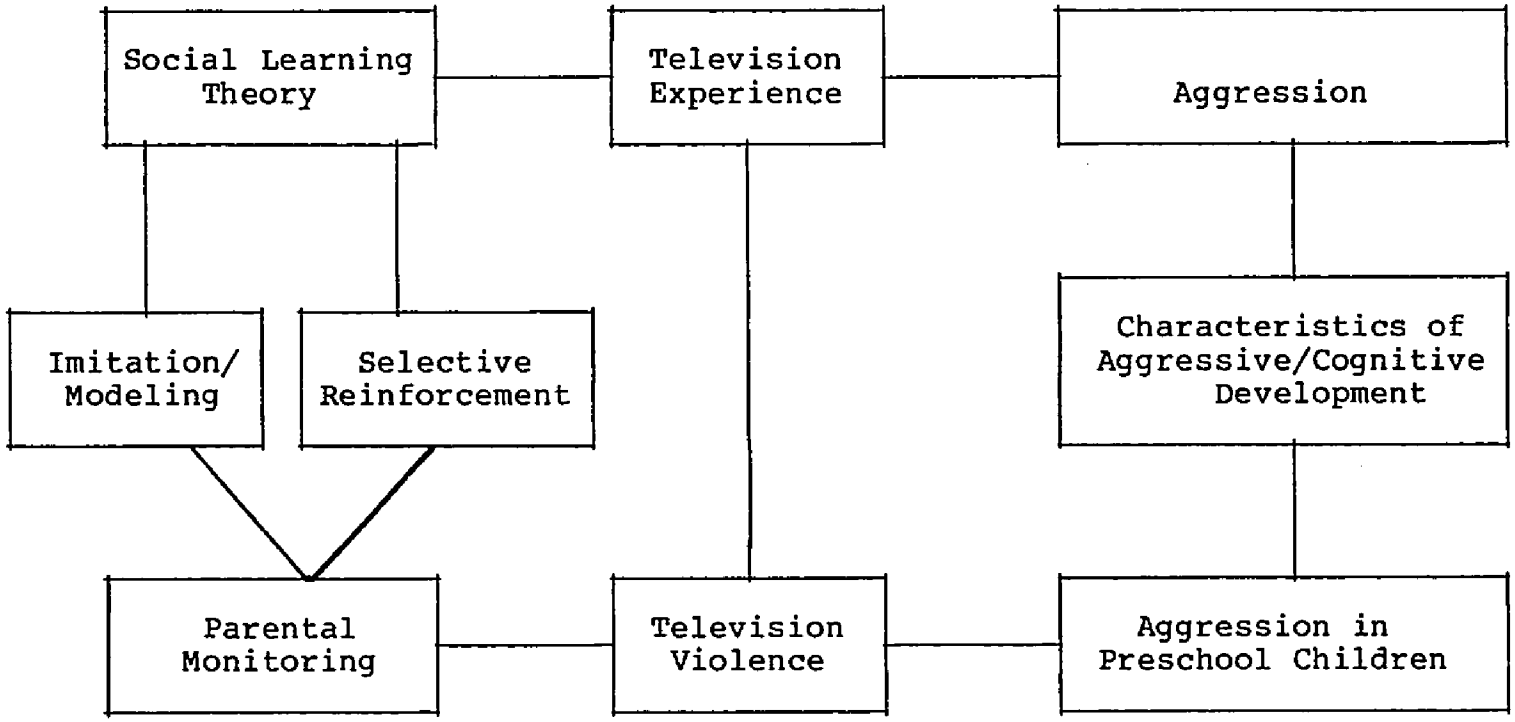

Figure 1. Conceptual Orientation of the Relationship of Parental Television Monitoring and Childhood Aggression.

television experience. At lower levels of abstraction, television violence, parental monitoring, characteristics of aggressive/cognitive development, and aggression in preschool children were conceptualized.

Aggression and Social Learning Theory

Aggressive behavior is common to most animal species and appears to be related to biological processes (Lorenz 1966). The potential then for behaving aggressively, and even some of the components of aggressive expression, may be innate. However, the nature and the form of aggressive expression, and its timing, depend on learning. Aggression is also a social act and a method of problem solving and, consequently, highly subject to the influence of experience and learning. Aggression in childhood appears to be universal, and learning to control aggression is an important aspect of socialization in all cultures.

Psychological theory and research are focused on the interpersonal and social factors affecting the child's tendency to behave aggressively. The forms and degrees of aggression a child will display depend on many factors, such as the intensity of his motivations, the degree of environmental frustration, his observation and imitation of aggressive models, and the amount of anxiety and guilt associated with the expression of aggression.

Theoretical positions which consider the learning experiences of the child to be the primary determinants of his aggressive behavior suggest two principal mechanisms by which the child acquires aggressive responses: selective reinforcement, resulting in rewards for being aggressive (Brown and Elliot 1965, Walters and Brown 1963, Patterson, Littman, and Bricker 1967, Lovaas 1961) and imitation or modeling (Bandura and Huston 1961, Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1963a, 1963b). The child, merely by observing aggressive adult and peer models, may acquire aggressive response tendencies without being specifically reinforced for an aggressive act.

The leading exponent of the modeling-imitation formulation of social learning theory has been Albert Bandura. As he has put it, "social learning theory assumes that modeling influences produce learning principally through their informative functions and that observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of modeled activities, rather than specific stimulus-response associations" (Bandura 1971b, p. 6).

According to social learning theory, human functioning relies on three regulatory systems: antecedent inducements, response feedback influences, and cognitive processes that guide and regulate action. Human aggression is a learned conduct that, like other forms of social behavior, is under stimulus, reinforcement, and cognitive control. To function effectively, a person must be able to anticipate the probable consequences of different events and courses of

action and regulate his behavior accordingly. Information about probable consequences is conveyed by environmental stimuli, such as verbal communications, pictorial cues, or the actions of others. A second central system involves behavior feedback influences, extensively in the form of reinforcing consequences. Responses that cause unrewarding or punishing effects tend to be discarded, whereas those that produce rewarding outcomes are retained and strengthened. People repeatedly observe the actions of others and the occasions on which they are rewarded, ignored, or punished. Vicarious reinforcement influences behavior in much the same way as outcomes that are directly experienced (Bandura 1971b). Human behavior is not always predictable from these external sources of influence. Man's cognitive capacities tremendously increase the information he can derive from his experiences, and therefore, in part, determine how he will be affected by them. Cognitive functioning is especially important in observational learning in which a person observes a pattern of behavior, but does not perform it overtly until appropriate circumstances arise. Modeled activities are acquired in symbolic form without behavioral enactment; they can be strengthened by mental rehearsal; and they provide the basis for action on later occasions given suitable inducements.

From a social learning view, then, the capability for observational learning is developed by acquiring skill in

discriminative observation, in memory encoding, in coordinating ideomotor and sensorimotor systems, and in judging probable consequences for matching behavior. People do not have to be angered or emotionally aroused to behave aggressively. A culture can produce highly aggressive people, while keeping frustration at a low level, by valuing aggressive accomplishments, furnishing successful aggressive models, and ensuring that aggressive actions are rewarded.

The Television Experience

The effects of mass media depend in large part on the frequency with which various audiences are exposed to them, as well as the content of programs viewed. In the annual report released by the A. C. Nielsen Company of the 1980-81 television season, the survey shows that virtually every household in the United States - 98 percent, or almost 82 million residences - has at least one television set. About 52 percent of the television households have more than one set, and 86 percent of the residences have at least one color television. The Nielsen Survey also shows a modest increase in the number of hours the average American household watches per day, a record of 6 hours and 44 minutes, compared to 6 hours and 35 minutes during 1979-80 (The San Diego Union T.V. Week, May 9-15, 1982). During the most recent survey period, 1981-82, we watched more than ever - 6 hours and 48 minutes (T.V. Guide, June 4-10, 1983).

It has been estimated that children actively begin watching television at the average age of 2.8 years and that viewing increases very rapidly during the next four years. By the age of 5, 82 percent of the children are viewing television regularly (Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961). Murray (1972) places the onset of television viewing at one and one-half to two years of age, followed by extensive television viewing during preschool and early elementary school years.

Peggy Charren, with Action for Children's Television, stated before the House Telecommunications Subcommitte Hearings on Television Violence on October 21, 1981, that children watch television on an average of 27 hours per week. Various earlier studies (Lyle and Hoffman 1972, Murray 1972, Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961) have indicated that children view between two and three 3 hours per day. Data obtained from A. C. Nielsen Company studies (Banks 1980), during an average week in February 1977, show that the average child viewed over 30 hours a week with only eight percent of that time spent on Saturday morning - the stereotyped "kidvid" time. Prime time (Monday through Sunday, 7:30 to 11:00 p.m.) received the single largest block of viewing for both 2 to 5 and 6 to 11 year olds, 23 percent and 37 percent respectively. Also significant was the Monday through Friday, 4:30-7:30 p.m. day part, often called "early fringe time" which received 21 percent. These Nielsen data, showing the

periods from late afternoon to 11:00 p.m. as receiving the bulk of children's television viewing, are greatly different from the patterns of viewing indicated in the literature previously by researchers who were particularly interested in weekend morning television shows (Bever et al. 1975, Lyle and Hoffman 1972a, 1972b).

The majority of top-10 rated shows among two through five-year-olds were telecast in the Saturday morning day part in 1969 and 1973. In 1977, however, they found most of their top-10 rated programs in prime-time (Banks 1980). This trend has continued. In 1981, prime-time situation comedies and adventure programs were everyone's favorites, children and adults alike. Situation comedy slipped to third place in 1982 behind feature films and mystery/suspense dramas as the most popular entertainment forms on television, according to the A. C. Nielsen Company (T.V. Guide, June 11-17, 1983).

Television Violence

American television contains one of the highest levels of violence of any countries for which data are available (Gerbner, Gross et al. 1980). Approximately 80 percent of all programs over the past decade contained one or more violent episodes (Gerbner and Gross 1976, Gerbner et al. 1977). Data, from 13 years of monitoring network prime-time and children's programming, indicate that the overall levels of violence have on the average remained relatively stable

during the period 1967-1979. Although there are differing levels in children's (highest) versus adult or "family" viewing time, the within category levels have been fairly constant (Gerbner, Gross et al. 1980). According to Gerbner and his colleagues, "an average of 5 acts of violence per prime-time hour (and four times that number per weekend daytime hours) involve more than half of all leading characters" (Gerbner, Gross et al. 1980, p. 20).

Programs directed at children have typically scored high on most measures of violence except for killing. Cartoons have consistently exceeded all other categories of programs, including action-type, in numbers of violent episodes per hour (Gerbner and Gross 1976, Gerbner et al. 1977). Ormiston (1973) analyzed cartoon violence for the Committee on Children's Television and found that the average rate for destructive interaction in cartoons was one act per minute. In addition, she found that 79 percent of the destructive interactions were rewarded and that the children were learning that destructive ways of interacting with others were not only appropriate but profitable.

The quarterly survey, ending May 23, 1981, by the National Coalition on Television Violence shows that prime-time violence has increased 16 percent over last year and that violence on Saturday morning children's shows is up 20 percent since last fall (San Diego Evening Tribune 1981).

The overwhelming conclusion that can be drawn from these content analyses is that violent behavior is a common theme in many of the television programs viewed in American homes.

Parental Monitoring

Various researchers have reported that a few parents routinely attempt to exercise control over television viewing in their home (Albert and Meline 1958, Hess and Goldman 1962, Streicher and Bonney 1974). In those homes where control is exercised, parental guidance is typically aimed at programs aired during family viewing hours and entails restrictions against watching specific programs.

Friedrich and Stein (1973), Lyle and Hoffman (1972b), Stein and Friedrich (1972) found that parents place very few restrictions on their children's television viewing, even in the preschool years. When parents do attempt to control children's viewing, however, such controls seem to have some effect in the early years (Friedrich and Stein 1973, Stein and Friedrich 1972).

Parents in the home setting have the greatest opportunity to influence their children's use of television. They can control actual viewing and cultivate program preferences, comment on specific content as it is shown and react when their children later act out things they have seen. They can

also help their children to discern the reality and relevance of what they are seeing.

There is little available evidence from the literature that parents consciously carry out these activities. In interviews, only about one-third of parents stated they have definite viewing rules (Hess and Goldman 1962, Lyle and Hoffman 1972a). These rules usually set special hours for viewing or restrict the total amount of viewing time. A larger proportion (about 70 percent) of the mothers studied by Lyle and Hoffman (1972a) stated that they often (about 25 percent of the mothers) or occasionally (about 45 percent of the mothers) selected which programs their children would watch.

If parental control over television is not as great as one would wish, there are at least two plausible explanations from the literature. Parents generally have positive attitudes toward television and its influence on their children. Mothers believe that more good than bad is derived from television, especially social interaction and ethics. This is as true of mothers who exercise considerable control as of those who exert little control (Barcus 1969). Another reason why parents do not exercise more control is suggested by Bruno Bettelheim, who contends that issues of discipline fall into two categories. In the first, when parents feel sure that it is truly necessary for their child's good, they will insist that the child comply. In the second, they may

believe that it is good for their child, but are not absolutely sure. Many issues concerning television and children belong in the second category and only when research has more positively established the nature of the effect of television violence on children will their parents know more surely how to exercise control over their children's viewing habits (Barcus 1969).

Parental socioeconomic status was found to be inversely related to amount of children's television viewing (Bailyn 1959, Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961, McLeod, Atkin, and Chaffee 1972a). Blood (1961) found that lower class children and black children apparently have greater control over their own television viewing, view television more frequently, and are less subject to parental concern over frequency and content of what they view. Lyle and Hoffman (1972a) suggest that socioeconomic status does not predict as strongly now as it did in the earlier studies. There are indications that age may modify the predictive power of socioeconomic status measures. Lyle and Hoffman (1972a) report no consistent differences in amount of viewing by sixth-grade children from "white-collar" and "blue-collar" homes, but do find a consistent tendency for tenth-graders from "blue-collar" homes to view more. Greenberg and Dervin (1970) found that children of lower-income families devoted more time to television and received less guidance about television viewing from parents. However, their results

indicate that socioeconomic differences in total viewing time are not as large among younger children as among teenagers. A 1976 A. C. Nielsen Company's National Audience Demographics Report (Comstock et al. 1978) found that socioeconomic status was a major factor in the amount of television viewed. Children in households with annual incomes of $15,000 or greater viewed several hours a day less than those in households with lower income. Education of head of household was also found to make a great difference. Viewing was more than six hours per week greater when parental educational level was less than completion of four years of college.

Race and ethnic group differences in amount of television viewing have also been found. Greenberg and Dervin (1970) and McIntyre and Teevan (1972) found more viewing by black children than by white, and Lyle and Hoffman (1972a) more viewing among Mexican American girls than among their Caucasian counterparts. There are tentative indications that age may modify race and ethnic group differences in viewing. Although Lyle and Hoffman (1972a) found that ethnic group membership predicted differences only among girls, within that subsample their data also indicated that the differences were roughly twice as large among tenth-grade children as among sixth-graders. Similarly, among lower-class children in Greenberg's data (1970), race differences in amount of viewing are somewhat larger for teenagers than for elementary school children.

Girls and boys do not appear to differ greatly in the amount of television they view, although their involvement follows different curves and their preferences diverge as they grow older. Very young girls and boys do not differ; in elementary schools, girls probably view more than boys (Comstock et al. 1978). In regard to amount of viewing, there are reports of no differences (Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961), of greater viewing by girls (Lyle and Hoffman 1972a) and of greater viewing by boys (Chaffee and McLeod 1972).

Adult comments about television content can serve as important learning cues for children (Hicks 1965). If parents comment about social behavior their children are viewing on television, they may influence decisions about trying out similar behaviors. An example of this has been presented by Hicks (1968).

For young children, simple verbal labeling of observed behavior appears to be important for learning. Coates and Hartup (1969) showed that 4-year-old children learned and remembered a model's behavior better when an adult labeled it than when they simply observed a model. Preschool children do not spontaneously label their experiences, although they can use labels if provided for them. Both verbal labeling and role playing of pro-social television content were explored in a study of kindergarten children by Friedrich and Stein (1975). Verbal labeling was found to be most effective

in increasing children's learning and understanding of program content and generalization to new situations.

Comprehension of explicitly portrayed events and implicit information in dramatic narratives in television programs has been found to be poor for young children, under the age of 8. In a recent experiment by Collins, Sobol, and Westby (1981), adult coviewers stated implicit relationships between important explicitly portayed events during television viewing for some second-grade children, while others heard neutral comments at the same points in the dramatic plot. It was found that the children who heard facilitating commentary scored significantly better on understanding of implicit program content relative to the adults' statements. It can then be concluded that adult coviewers may facilitate inferences about important program content for young viewers who are unlikely to infer such relations spontaneously.

O'Bryant and Corder-Bolz (1978) in their research on parental mediation of television have found that adults can dramatically influence the information a child learns and retains from watching television if they will re-phrase television dialogue, define difficult words and make further explanation of the events portrayed during a program. Their research findings also showed the apparent ability of an adult to decidedly influence and change a young child's attitude.

Characteristics of Aggressive/Cognitive Development

Aggressive Development. Although the literature dealing with aggressive behavior in children is broad, little actually pertains to ontogenetic issues and little originates from developmental theory. We do not know from which early motor patterns the components of later aggression are shaped for any species (Hartup 1974). It has been suggested that the rage reaction (tantrums) may be the source of early aggressive behavior (Hamburg and Van Lawick-Goodall 1974). For most species, the contexts which serve as sources for aggressive development have not been specified (Hartup 1974). Field research and laboratory studies (Harlow and Harlow 1965, Jay 1968) suggest that the context which accounts for most of the variance in the development of nonhuman primate aggression is rough-and-tumble contact with peers.

Age changes in the aggressive behavior of human children have been documented in only a few studies, i.e., Feshbach (1970), Hartup (1974). About all that can be said about age changes in the form of human aggressive behavior is that, from two through six years of age, there is an increase in the utilization of language in aggressive outbursts. Several studies show greater verbal aggression in girls than in boys. In their study of the conflicts of preschool children, Jersild and Markey (1935) observed that girls used language as a technique of conflict more frequently than boys. In a study by Muste and Sharp (1947), girls surpassed boys in the

proportion of their total number of aggressive responses characterized by verbalization and in the proportion of verbal responses in all of their responses to the aggression of others. McCarthy (1930) noted that, in the development of language during the preschool years, girls tended to progress at a somewhat more rapid rate than boys. The common finding that boys display significantly more antisocial aggression than girls in the nursery school has been replicated numerous times in studies (Green 1933, Dawe 1934, Siegel 1956, Sears, Rau, and Alpert 1965). In the Sears study, interpersonal aggression and injury to objects was more typically masculine, whereas verbal and prosocial aggression were typically feminine. In girls, interpersonal aggression increased with age, a relationship reflected in the observed ratings as well as in the time sample measures. In boys, tattling increased. Numerous previous studies have cited increasing age as being positively related to the frequency of aggressive behavior during the preschool years (Bridges 1931, Murphy 1937, Muste and Sharp 1947, Walters, Pearce, and Dahms 1957).

Florence Goodenough's (1931) data about age differences in children's angry behavior found that, "with advancing age, the forms of behavior displayed during anger become more definitely directed toward a given end, while the primitive bodily responses of the infant and young child are gradually replaced by substitute reactions commonly of a somewhat less violent and more symbolic character" (p. 69).

The studies of Dawe (1934) and Goodenough (1931) also contain the only differentiated information concerning age changes in the instigators of aggressive behavior. Goodenough found that, in infancy, angry outbursts are principally related to physical discomforts and needs for attention. During the second and third years, however, such episodes are elicited increasingly by "habit training." Social problems with peers emerge at this time as instigators of angry outbursts and predominate in the following years. Dawe's (1934) study of 200 quarrels occurring in a nursery school also inform us about age changes in the events that elicit aggressive behavior: (a) Although possession-instigated quarrels predominated at every age level from 18 months though 65 months of age, 78 percent of the youngest children's quarrels were started in this way while only 38 percent of the oldest children's quarrels began in this manner; (b) Physical violence increased as an instigator of quarreling from 8 percent to 27 percent, and "social adjustment" increased from 3 percent to 15 percent during the period covered. These data hint at two concommitant developmental changes in the functional character of young children's aggressive behavior during the preschool period, i.e., an increase in person-directed, retaliatory, and hostile outbursts and a relative decrease in straightforward instrumental aggression (aggression which is aimed at the retrieval of an object, territory or privilege).

Bolman (1974) has delineated some developmental aspects of violence (see Table 1, p. 28).

Known facts about children's social cognitive development suggest that hostile aggression should not be as strongly characteristic of the aggressive behavior of younger as of older children. Under the age of six, children have limited capacities for role-taking and the generation of inferences and attributions about other people (Flavell 1968). Furthermore, self-esteem, valuations of self-competence, and notions about one's status are relatively rudimentary and unstable. Since references to self-esteem and attributions about the intentions of the agent of frustration are prerequisites to hostile aggression, a lesser proportion of this type of aggression would be expected for younger than for older children (Hartup 1974). Prediction of developmental changes in instrumental aggression is more difficult. Dawe (1934) reported a declining percentage of instrumental aggression in association with increased age. Feshbach (1964) and Rule (1974) have suggested that goal-blocking should elicit instrumental aggression rather than hostile aggression, whatever the individual's age. Hartup (1974) found that instrumental aggression occurred significantly more frequently among the younger children and hostile aggression among the older children. He also found that goal-blocking produced a significantly higher percentage of instrumental aggression among the younger children than among

Table 1. Some Developmental Aspects of Violence.

Age	Type	Object	Aim	Other Qualities
Birth-6 mos.	Undifferentiated unpleasure	None	Relief or reduction of tension	Involves whole organism with no differentiation between self and side object
6 mos.-2 yrs.	Semidifferentiated rage	Any frustrating object, animate or inanimate	Elimination of frustrating object	Self versus outside gradually achieved but still variable; presumed stage for some instances of murder, suicide, arson, etc., in children/adults
1-3 yrs.	Directed rage, tantrums, anger	Specific object, usually mother or sibling	Control or domination of frustrating object; sadistic aims - hurt, torture, etc.	Talion principle ("eye for an eye") applies; control and domination of love object important, power struggles normal; presumed stage for some delinquency, sadistic acts, etc.
2-5 yrs.	Modified rage and tantrums, ambivalence, jealousy, envy	Admired or feared object, usually parents	Resolution of conflicting mixtures of love and hate, maintenance of parental love, getting even	Attempts to imitate and identify with parents, hence denial and displacement of anger is common; aggressive fantasy becomes important
4-7 yrs.	Anger, jealousy, envy	As above	As above	Internalization of rules and morals begins; fantasy and verbal expression preferred; displacement common, as onto sibling, a scapegoat or aggressive games
6-14 yrs.	Anger, annoyance, dislike, envy, covetousness, desire, jealousy, criticism	Peers, siblings, self	Winning, competing, assuring "fairness", mastery of feelings	Rationality and self-control become increasingly effective; boys fight physically, girls fight verbally; substitution, sublimation, competition are typical

Bolman, William M. "Aggression and Violence in Children," Current Problems in Pediatrics, 4(9):3-32, 1974, pp. 8-9.

the older children. He also attributed this to the lesser sociocognitive maturity of the younger children.

In summary, data concerning the developmental course of aggression is sparse. The paucity of information extends to information about changes in the form of the aggressive acts themselves, the contexts in which the aggression originates, the circumstances that elicit aggressive episodes, and the stability of individual tendencies to respond aggressively across time and circumstance.

Cognitive Development. Cognitive development is learning and depends upon innate capacity, maturation, nutrition, gross and fine motor stimulation, touch, stimulation of all senses through various activities, language, and social interaction. Cognitive behavior includes thinking, perceiving, remembering, forming concepts, making judgments, generalizing, and abstracting (Stone and Church 1973).

According to Piaget, the child begins the preoperational stage of intellectual development at about age 2 and continues this level of learning through the late preschool era. During this time, thought is more symbolic - derived from imitation. The child understands simple abstractions, but thinking is basically concrete (related to tangible events) and literal. He is egocentric (unable to take the viewpoint of another) and his concept of time is "now" and his concept of distance is whatever he can see (Wadsworth 1971, Ginsburg and Opper 1969). Additional characteristics

of this stage of cognitive development are: Absence of reference system; intermingling of fantasy and reality; centering, "focusing on a single aspect of an object," causing distorted reasoning; lack of the concept of reversibility - for every action, there is one "that cancels it;" static thinking; and inability to state cause-effect relationships, categories, or abstractions (Lidz 1968, Piaget 1926).

It is generally accepted that the preschool years are among the most important in a child's development. Our present knowledge of the development of learning abilities indicates that the preschool years are the most important years of learning in the child's life. A tremendous amount of learning takes place during these years, and this learning is the foundation for all future learning.

It is suggested that preschool children are particularly susceptible to television's effects. They are in the age group that opponents of television violence consider to be particularly impressionable and at risk. The following authors have hypothesized that the younger the child the greater the effects that television may have on him. Preschool children are thought to be especially susceptible because they are less able than older children to separate fantasy from reality (Schramm et al. 1961, Ward and Wackman 1973) and because there is a "void" in their socialization experiences (Lange et al. 1969). Professionals who work with young children stress that one of the most important lessons

a young child must learn is to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Dr. Albert Solnit, Sterling Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry and Director of Yale Child Study Center, has said:

> "Children under the age of six are more vulnerable to being confused because their sense of reality, their ability to use logic, their ability to use what we call orderly causal thinking is not as available to them developmentally until they are about 6 or 7. Under 6 or 7 and especially under the age of 4, the very strong built-in capacity for explaining things by magical thinking, by the sense of the power of magical feeling, will make them more vulnerable to such confusion" (Charren and Sarson 1972, p. 30).

Collins (1973) and Leifer and Roberts (1972) found that understanding both motives and consequences for televised aggression improves with age. The youngest children understood very little of either. Collins (1973) found this especially likely when commercials or other extraneous material separate the violent action in time, as they often do in media presentations, from the emotions and consequences associated with it. Collins, Berndt, and Hess (1973) suggest that one reason for this lack of understanding is the inability to understand means-end relations and difficulty in distinguishing relevant from incidental content.

Ward and Wackman (1973) outlined a model of information processing for televised events. In this model, they suggest age differences in the type of features children select for processing while attending to television. Specifically, they suggest that preschool children focus their

attention on visual features of televised presentations and attend less closely to other characteristics such as semantic or auditory features.

Hager and Birnbaum's experiments with preschoolers (1980) replicated the visual-superiority effect of Ward and Wackman's model. These findings raise questions about the effectiveness of purely auditory messages that are presented to mediate the effects of visually presented events (e.g., televised violence).

Dr. Aletha Huston Stein, writing on "Mass Media and Young Children's Development" in the yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 1972, states: "Children apparently react to media more intensely than adults. More important, they often interpret a plot differently and, as a result, respond emotionally to different aspects of its content" (p. 322).

Definition of Terms

In this study, definition of the following terms is essential.

1. Aggressive Behaviors: those behaviors observed in the children which evidenced aggression as defined by the items in the observation checklist of Walters, Pearce, and Dahms (1957) and Davies (1974). The intent of the items is to identify behaviors that are expressive of the following:

"an actual attack upon another person or object whether it be by gesture or by hostile or provocative language directed toward another child or adult" (Walters, Pearce, and Dahms 1957, p. 15).

2. Children: Subjects between the ages of 3 and 5 years attending MiraCosta College Child Development Laboratory.
3. Monitoring of television viewing will include:
   a. Parent(s) select the television programs that children will be viewing.
   b. Parent(s) determine the amount of television viewing time allowed children.
   c. Parent(s) watch the television programs with the children.
   d. Parent(s) explain the program content and/or meaning to children.
4. Episode of Free Play: During an unstructured period of time not directed by the teacher, whether in the schoolroom or on the playground, the child chooses which activities or games he or she will participate in.

CHAPTER 2

SELECTED REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following chapter presents a selected review of the literature that relates to the problems identified in this study. Scholarly analyses and studies that pertain to observational learning and aggressive behavior, the effects of viewing live, filmed or televised aggression on children's aggressive behavior and the effects of monitoring efforts on the regulation of aggressive behavior are cited.

Observational Learning and Aggressive Behavior

The issue most fundamental to the question of the effects of television on children revolves around the question of observational learning. Observational learning is the way in which the behavior of children and adults changes as a result of exposure to the behavior of others, whether demonstrated directly or through films, television or print. Modeling or imitative behavior has been presented as an antecedent or determinant of aggression (Eron et al. 1961, Bandura 1962, Bandura and Walters 1963).

Some of the most productive work on observational learning has been done by Albert Bandura of Stanford University who is a respresentative exponent of a widely supported position in American psychology and psychiatry which

emphasizes the fact that much of a child's behavior is acquired in more or less direct imitation of parental or peer models. Bandura (1969) maintains that observational learning involves three basic steps: first, an observer views a model demonstrating a behavior in person, on film, or on television; second, the modeled behavior is coded, either visually or verbally, by the observer so that it may be mentally rehearsed and remembered; and third, the coded information can be translated into performance of that behavior at a later time.

Performance of the modeled behavior depends upon the consequences that are delivered to the model or that the observer thinks will be delivered to him if he imitates that behavior. If the observer believes he will receive or observes the model receive a reward for his actions, there is an increased probability that he will imitate the modeled behavior. If the observer anticipates no consequences for a destructive act or observes that there are no consequences to the model for his destructive act, then the observer might imitate the act. In this situation no punishment for a destructive act is interpreted as approval. If the observer believes he will receive or observes the model receive punishment, then there is an increased probability that he will not imitate the behavior (Bandura 1965a, Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1963c).

Rosekrans and Hartup (1967) examined the effect of discrepant, observed consequences on imitative aggression. Children who saw assaultive behavior consistently rewarded were most aggressive; those who saw it consistently punished displayed virtually no imitative behavior; while those who saw aggression sometimes rewarded and sometimes punished exhibited a moderate level of aggressiveness. It is the latter mixed pattern of reinforcement that predominates in everyday life.

There are many experimental laboratory experiments which substantiate the principles of observational learning and that are particularly relevant to the issue of the effects of violence on the aggressive behavior of children. Of special significance for this study are the studies dealing with the children's imitation of aggression manifested by adults whom they have observed. The major studies of the impact of film and television violence were the experiments conducted by Bandura and his colleagues with young children. In their initial study (Bandura and Houston 1961) children while at play saw an adult engage in various play activities, some of which were aggressive. Subsequently, 90 percent of the children specifically exposed to the aggressive play were inclined to show aggressive reactions in their own play. Control subjects, not exposed to aggressive play, failed to manifest any incidental aggressive reactions.

A second study (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1961) involved three groups of nursery school children: one group observed an adult model attacking a Bobo doll, a life-sized, inflated rubber toy; the second group viewed the same model engaged in innocuous constructive tinker-toy play; and, a third group was not exposed to a model's aggression. The children were then frustrated by being shown desirable toys with which they were forbidden to play. They were then taken to another room in which there were a variety of toys, for example, Bobo doll, mallets, tinker-toys. The spontaneous play of the children was then observed. The results indicated that the frustrated children exposed to the model's aggression demonstrated significantly more aggression in their own play than the other two groups. In some instances, in fact, they showed remarkably direct imitations of the actual aggressive play of the model.

The next study in this series attempted to compare a filmed model's effects with that of a live model (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1961). In this study, four groups of nursery school children were involved: one group saw a modeling situation similar to the one in the previous study, a live model aggressing against a Bobo doll; the second group saw a film of the same activity projected on a television screen; the third group saw a film of the same aggressive behavior with the model disguised as a cartoon-type character; the fourth group saw no model. The results showed that the three

experimental groups showed significantly more aggressive behavior than the control group. Of special importance in this study were the findings that the film-mediated models, both the adult and cartoon-type figures, were more effective in producing aggressive responses by the children than the live adult model.

The next study conducted by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963a) has become the basis for much of the ensuing research. Three groups of preschool children were used. Some children observed an adult display a series of aggressive responses toward a Bobo doll; others saw the same behavior demonstrated by an adult in a film; and the third group saw an aggressive adult model dressed as a cartoon animal perform the aggressive acts. The behavior of these children was then contrasted with that of children in a control group who did not witness a display of aggression. The findings were that all three groups of children displayed more imitative physical and verbal aggression than did the children who had not seen the film. Although imitative aggression was greater following exposure to a real-life model than to a cartoon character, the incidence of imitative aggression did not differ between children who had been exposed to aggressive adults in person and in film. In addition, non-imitative aggression was higher for children who had observed the film than for those in the control group that had not observed aggression. The results indicated,

therefore, that viewing aggression seemed to heighten the children's general tendencies to behave aggressively and to offer them examples of specific forms that aggression could take.

In a subsequent study (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1963b) which utilized a similar design, the effect of having a film-mediated adult model punished or rewarded for their aggression was studied. It was shown that the children who saw the aggressive model punished were less likely to imitate the behavior later in their own play than those who witnessed the model rewarded for aggressive behavior, or than those who saw a non-aggressive model or who had no exposure to a model.

Bandura (1963) in still another study demonstrated that children imitated the aggressive play of either a rewarded or neither-rewarded nor punished model. When the children were later requested to reproduce the behavior of the models, the children who had witnessed the model being punished could replicate his aggressive actions very accurately. It was concluded that the observation of punished aggression had suppressed manifestations of aggression but it had not prevented the children from learning it. A follow-up to the previous experiment (Bandura 1965a) tested the hypothesis that the consequences of the aggression must have influenced only the children's willingness to display what they had learned, not the amount they had learned. When the

children were offered a reward for each aggressive incident they could recall, there were no differences between the three conditions.

Several studies have demonstrated that one exposure to a violent cartoon leads to increased aggression. Lovaas (1961) found that nursery school children exposed to an aggressive movie cartoon made more aggressive responses with a toy than did other children shown a less violent film. Mussen and Rutherford (1961) used a similar design and concluded that film-mediated fantasy aggression may intensify aggressive expression in permissive play. Ellis and Sekyra (1972) have concluded similar findings.

Hanratty, Liebert, Morris and Fernandez (1969) found that 4 and 5-year-old boys who viewed a film in which an adult male aggressed against a human clown were more aggressive than those who did not view the film. In a second experiment (Hanratty 1969), it was again found that a film of this type, without other provocation, would lead children to physically assault a human victim. Moreover, such aggression was displayed by both girls and boys and for films in which both an 8 year old boy and an adult served as models.

A final study of considerable importance was carried out by Hicks (1965). In this investigation, young children were shown films of children and adults engaging in aggressive play, were mildly frustrated and then given an opportunity for free play. All the model conditions were

found to be highly effective in shaping the young children's aggressive responses. Of real significance, however, was the finding that six months after viewing the adult male's aggressive behavior, the children could imitate it. In a second study by the same researcher (Hicks 1968), retention of more than 60 percent of the model's aggressive acts two months after observation and 40 percent retention for a period of eight months afterward was demonstrated. A long-range modeling effect has also been reported by Kniveton (1973a). He has shown imitative aggression among British preschool children five months after observation of the model. This special feature of the above studies raises the question of persistence of modeling effects. Can a single exposure to television have a long-term influence on children?

The major impact of these studies on the imitation of live or film-mediated models can be summarized as follows. The evidence supports the contention that nursery school age children do imitate the aggressive behavior of adults or cartoon characters whether observed live or on films; that the imitation in young children often takes the form of rather direct imitation, even of novel aggressive responses; that the observation by young children of film-mediated aggressive play leads to subsequent imitation, especially if the model is rewarded or neither rewarded nor punished and if no disapproval of the adult model's behavior is provided by adults in

the child's presence; that aggressive responding increases with observation; that children learn more from observing aggression than they ordinarily are willing to display; and that there may be evidence of retention and performance of imitative response after a very substantial time lapse, indicating long-term imitative effects after observation of film-mediated aggression by young children.

Television Violence and Aggressive Behavior

There is probably no other question concerning television's impact that has generated as much publicity, professional study, and public interest as the question regarding the influence of televised violence on the viewer's aggressive behavior, particularly children. Some experimental work has attempted to gain insight into the problem of filmed material and aggressive behavior in interpersonal situations.

In a study conducted for the Surgeon General's research program by Liebert and Baron (1972), the authors studied young children's willingness to hurt or help another child after viewing videotaped sections of standard typical aggressive or neutral television programs. The main findings were that the children who watched the aggressive program demonstrated a greater willingness to hurt another child. Also, when the children were later observed during free play,

those who had viewed the aggressive program exhibited a greater preference for playing with weapons and aggressive toys than did the children who had viewed the neutral programming.

Additionally, a study by Leifer and Roberts (1972) evaluated children's willingness to use violence to resolve conflict situations with other children following exposure to violent films or television programs. They found that the children who had viewed an aggressive program were clearly more likely to choose violent/aggressive solutions.

The hypothesis that observation of violence serves to shape viewer's expectancies about real-life behavior and/or to reduce emotional responsivity to witnessed violence was proposed by Drabman and Thomas (1974). They assessed children's willingness to intervene in the ongoing disruptive and assaultive behavior of younger children following the viewing of aggressive television content. Results indicated that children who had viewed the aggressive program were slower to intervene and were more likely to watch until the disruptive behavior has escalated into presumed serious physical assault before seeking help.

Eron and his colleagues (Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz, and Walder 1972) did a longitudinal study assessing the relationship between preferences for violent television programs during early childhood and socially significant aggression in childhood and adolescence. These researchers obtained

peer-rated measures of behavioral aggression and preferences for various types of television programs, radio, and comic books when the children were eight years old. Ten years later, the investigators again obtained measures of aggressive behavior and television program preferences. After examination of their data, the authors concluded that "the single most plausible causal hypothesis is that preference for watching violent television in the third grade contributes to the development of aggressive habits" (p. 258).

Eron and Huesmann recently undertook another longitudinal study (the Chicago Circle Study) to determine the generality of their earlier findings obtained with eight-year-old children in a semi-rural area of New York State (the Rip Van Winkle Study). This new study corroborated the findings of the original study. In addition, we now know that the relationship between viewing violence and aggressive behavior can already be accounted for at age six, and both boys and girls are affected in the same way at that age (Eron 1980, Eron 1982).

Jerome and Dorothy Singer (1981), who observed children's physically aggressive behavior in nursery school over a period of a year, have also reported that such behavior was related to the amount of violence that the children, ages three and four years old, viewed on television.

In a naturalistic study conducted with preschool children, Steuer, Applefield, and Smith (1971) attempted to

assess the cumulative effects of viewing televised violence. Five matched pairs of preschool children, based on the amount of home television viewing, were observed in a free-play peer interaction for a baseline period. Following this period, one child in the matched pair viewed a series of aggressive cartoons and the other viewed a series of nonaggressive programs. The significant feature of this study is the demonstrated cumulative effect of exposure to televised violence, despite the relatively short viewing period.

Stein and Friedrich (1972), Friedrich and Stein (1973) conducted one of the few field studies showing a strong link between watching aggressive films and a heightening of aggressive behavior. Ninety-seven preschool children were shown either "anti-social, pro-social, or neutral" television programs. The children were then observed through a nine-week period consisting of three weeks of previewing baseline, four weeks of television exposure, and two weeks of follow-up. All observations were conducted in a naturalistic setting while the children were engaged in activities of daily living. The results indicated that children who were initially high in aggression and also saw violent programs evidenced increased interpersonal aggression.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the effects of televised influences on social behavior. The findings show that exposure to televised violence can have numerous effects on viewers. In summary, children learn

from television just as they learn from any visual-auditory display; they learn techniques or methods of violence which would otherwise not come to their attention; many programs have a general arousing effect which makes violence more probable; violent fantasy activity on television is believed to stimulate the child's own violent fantasies through identification; witnessing aggressive action on television reduces the child's inhibitions against aggressive expression, desensitizes and habituates people to violence; exposure to aggressive interactions on television may weaken external restraints, especially if these actions meet with approval rather than punishment and shapes people's images of reality upon which they base many of their actions.

In the general incitement to aggression, the child learns how to be aggressive from viewing television, is aroused to act out the techniques he has learned through television and other media, and experiences little fear of punishment for giving overt expression to aggressive inclinations.

Effects of Monitoring on Regulation of Aggressive Behavior

Singer and Singer (1981), as an off-shoot of their study, interviewed the families of 40 children in their study to ascertain the special characteristics of the families. The major systematic difference that emerged was centered on the high-aggressive, high television-viewing families who

were chiefly characterized by a considerable laxity in control of the television set on the part of the parents. The children in this group were allowed to stay up later and by parental report were the ones who controlled the television set, despite the greater amount of joint family watching. Their data and interview information suggest that if the parents do not play an extremely active role by conversing with the children in order to minimize the impact of the violent shows, simply sitting there will not have the desired effect.

Aggression, as an instrumental response, can be unlearned as well as learned, and it is possible to train children to respond nonaggressively to situations which would ordinarily provoke an aggressive reaction (Davitz 1952, Walters and Brown 1963). The experiment by Davitz (1952) is particularly important in this regard. A series of seven training sessions were held for groups of children 7-9 years of age. Half of the groups were praised for aggressive behavior while the other half were reinforced for cooperative responses. After this initial training period, the children were then exposed to a frustrating experience. In the subsequent free-play session, a striking difference in behavior was noted as a result of the experimental training program. Those children who had been trained to respond aggressively displayed more aggression than the group trained in

cooperative activities who, in contrast, responded more cooperatively.

This study and the modeling experiments previously cited (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1961, 1963a) point to the potential use of selective reinforcement and exposure to nonaggressive models as methods for modifying aggressive behavior by changing the child's response to a provoking stimulus situation.

Another alternative, modifying the meaning of the stimulus for the child so that it is no longer perceived as provocative, has been effectively demonstrated in an experience by Mallick and McCandless (1966). Third-graders, following frustration or non-frustration, were randomly assigned to one of three treatments: "interpretation of frustration," aggressive play, or a control condition. The interpretation condition consisted of offering various rationalizations for the behavior of the person who frustrated the child. Each child was then given the chance to interfere with or help the individual who had frustrated him. Although there was little difference between the aggressive play and control groups who had been frustrated, the "interpretation" group displayed significantly less aggression than either of the other two groups.

These results indicate that aggressive behavior can be modified by means of a cognitive process of reviewing and restructuring a frustrating, distressing experience.

A few studies have examined the role of adults, as a source of sanctions on children's behavior following media presentations. Hicks (1968) found that when an adult observed an aggressive film with the child, making either approving or disapproving comments about the violence as it occurred, subsequent imitation by the children was a function of the adult's comments.

McLeod, Atkins and Chaffee (1972a, 1972b) report that parents who interpret television portrayals of violence as inappropriate or unrealistic can reduce the harmful influence of that violence in children.

Linné (1971) proposed that the response of the family to television content can attenuate or reduce the influence of this content on the socialization of the child. The family who comments adversely on television violence when it appears on the screen are less likely to have an aggressive child grow up in their midst than the family who condones or fails to comment on television violence.

Ball and Bogatz (1970) found that children who viewed Sesame Street in the presence of parents who discussed the program with them learned significantly more than did children who viewed alone.

These studies indicate that comments made to children by adults while viewing a television program significantly shape the way in which the child interprets the program and the likelihood that the child will subsequently perform

behaviors acquired from the program. When adults play an active, interpretive role, they can significantly moderate television's impact on the behavior of children.

Summary of Research

1. Children can acquire aggressive ways of behaving from television and will exhibit these aggressive responses in play behavior.
2. The presentation of violent or aggressive acts is more emotionally arousing through the audio-visual media (motion pictures and television) than it is in the purely visual media of print or audio media of radio.
3. Arousal may heighten awareness or involvement, but it also has the potential of being emotionally disturbing and consequently of evoking aggressive feelings.
4. Media content that is perceived as literally real, or as resembling reality, is more arousing than content that is perceived or accepted as fictional.
5. Children are more impressionable and susceptible to arousal than are adults.
6. People who are intellectually, emotionally, or socially disadvantaged are less capable than

others of gauging the reality of media content and are more readily aroused.

7. A single, highly-charged media episode can be perceived as intensely realistic.
8. Even when it is presented as fiction or fantasy, a single media episode can provide a role model or suggest techniques of conduct.
9. A single episode of media content may be sufficiently arousing to have emotionally disquieting after-effects on many of those who have been exposed to it.
10. Repeated exposure to media content that shows violence routinely used as a technique of solving interpersonal problems and enforcing social controls can lead to a more general acceptance of violence exercised by private individuals and by public authorities.
11. Repeated exposure to media presentations of fictional violence might dull sensibilities to the horror of real violence.
12. Adults, parents and other authority figures can influence and change a young child's attitudes and behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The problem for this investigation was to study the relationship of parental television monitoring and children's aggressive behavior. Four specific questions for the study were: 1) What are the amount and characteristics of parental monitoring effort for television viewing of preschool children? 2) What is the patterning of aggressive behavior of preschool children? 3) What are the similarities and the differences in "expressed" behavioral acts of aggression, between children, when parents have monitored their television viewing and when they have not? 4) What are the television habits and experiences of preschool children? This chapter includes a discussion of the research design, the setting for data collection, how the sample was selected, the means for protection of the subject's rights, and how the data were collected. Also included was a description of the measurement tools used, a discussion of the procedures used for interviewing and observation, and the method of data analysis.

Research Design

A comparative descriptive survey was used as the research design, using a questionnaire and direct observation

and behavioral sampling. In this study, a review of the literature led to an interest in how parental television monitoring might be associated with lower incidence of behavioral aggression.

In order to answer the questions posed by the study, a parental monitoring questionnaire was developed (see Appendix A). Secondly, a behavioral rating scale was adapted (see Appendix B) from the work of Walters, Pearce, and Dahms (1957) and Davies (1974).

The parental questionnaire had three sections: a demographic data section provided part of the data to answer the questions regarding background differences and similarities; the second portion of the questionnaire, the first three questions, was designed to determine the television habits and experience of the children; the remaining four questions were formulated to ascertain the parental monitoring efforts. Responses to these four questions made it possible to divide the children into high, moderate, and low-monitoring groups.

The second tool was selected to elicit responses which would answer the question on the characteristics of the expressed behavioral aggression of preschool children. In addition, the responses provided additional data on background differences and similarities which were collated with the demographic data to finally answer the question as to differences and similarities. The instrument is an

Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors, for use in recording observations of expressed physical and verbal aggression during free play.

Setting

All data were collected at a preschool Child Development Laboratory of a community college in Southern California. The facility provided experiences for approximately 50 preschool children, aged 2-1/2 to 5 years. Children were transported to and from the school by parents, significant family members, and friends.

Sample

The participants in the study consisted of a convenience sample of 31 children and their parent(s), selected from the student population of a college Child Development Laboratory. The following criteria were used for subject selection:

1. Children between the ages of three and five years, attending preschool.
2. Children and parents who were English-speaking.
3. Children who have a television set in their homes.
4. Children who were identified as being free of major medical or mental health problems by the Director of the Child Development Laboratory.

5. Children/parents of the children who were identified as appropriate subjects by the Director of the Child Development Laoratory.

Protection of Human Subjects

The human rights of all subjects were protected according to the Health, Education and Welfare guidelines and written policies of the University of Arizona Ethical Committee's "Human Subjects Committee Manual of Procedures" (1977). Prior to admission to the study and the beginning of data collection, all parents or guardians of the children who met the criteria for selection to the study were given a thorough explanation of the study and their participation, as well as that of their child's, by the investigator. They were also given an information sheet to read (see Appendix C). All parents or guardians of the subjects were approached in the same manner at the preschool by the investigator, either singly or in group meeting. Lastly, their verbal consent was obtained for their and their child's participation in the study.

Data Collection

This section includes a description of the measurement tools used and a discussion of the procedures used for interviewing and observation.

Tools

The first measurement tool (the parental questionnaire) consisted of three areas of requests for information.

The first pertained to demographic data, such as the date, name, age, sex, family occupation(s), and ethnicity of the child. The second area consisted of three questions drawn from the literature to ascertain the television habits and experiences of their child. The third area, consisting of four questions, was structured to determine parental monitoring efforts. Each of the four questions was considered to be of equal importance and therefore weighted equally in computing the raw scores. The items for the questionnaire were drawn from an intensive review of the literature and included information on 1) amount of time of television viewing; 2) type of programs; 3) favorite programs; and, 4) the monitoring efforts of parents.

The second measurement tool was an Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors, adapted from the one that was used by Elizabeth Davies in an unpublished Master's Thesis (1974) at the University of Arizona. The Davies' aggressive categories/items were adapted from the Walters, Pearce, and Dahms' (1957) tool, which, in turn, was developed from categories reported in an unpublished paper by Dr. Jacob L. Gerwitz of the University of Chicago. Interrater reliability was reported at (0.847). No information on validity testing was reported by the researchers (Walters, Pearce, and Dahms

1957). The Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors, used in this study, had eight items of physical aggression and ten items of verbal aggression.

Procedures for Interviewing and Observation

Those parents who verbally consented to take part in the study were given a three-part parental questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain: 1) selected demographic data; 2) their child's television viewing habits and experiences; and, 3) monitoring efforts by parents. The investigator requested that it be returned within three days. Fifty-two parental questionnaires were distributed.

After the questionnaire was completed and returned, the investigator observed one child of each parental participant during spontaneous free play, either in the schoolroom or on the playground. An "episode of free play" was defined as an unstructured and non-directed period of time, whether in the schoolroom or on the playground, when a child chooses which activities or games in which he/she will participate. No observations were made in situations in which the teacher was directing the activity; (e.g., story time, arts and crafts, movies, show and tell, music, or exercise periods). Examples of activities observed during free-play periods include playing tag; playing on the jungle-gym, swings, slides, wooden bridge; riding tricycles on the playground;

playing with toys, games, puzzles; and, coloring, drawing, and painting in the schoolroom.

The observation was conducted for a period of five minutes following an aggressive action identified from the Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors (see Appendix B). For the purposes of this study, only aggressive behaviors listed on the Observation Checklist were recorded, along with the pertinent demographic data for each child.

All non-participant observation was carried out solely by the investigator, to provide uniformity in observation of free play and recording of behavioral sampling. The observer sat near the child so that any conversation could be heard easily, but the observer did not interact with the children. Observatiuon time was measured by the use of a timer.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of four steps. The first step was that of determining the amount of parental monitoring effort. The last four items from the parental questionnaire, equally weighted and a priori assigned 100 points each, were totalled individually and across the entire group to determine the range of raw scores. The scores were then divided into three groups, the lowest group for low-monitoring, the moderate group for moderate-monitoring, and

the highest group for high-monitoring. This analysis answers the question on parental monitoring effort.

In the second step, data from the Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors were totalled for each child on each category of physical and verbal aggression, and total scores were then totalled across all children by category for physical aggresison, verbal aggression, and total aggression. This analysis answers the question on the patterning of aggressive behavior of preschool children.

The third step was to assign each set of child observations to one of three monitoring groups, based on the results of the parental monitoring questionnaire. These data answer the question on the similarities and differences in expressed, behavioral aggression between children when parents have monitored their television viewing and when they have not.

The fourth step in the analysis was to collate the responses from the parental questionnaire regarding the television habits and experiences of the child. Frequencies were calculated for each of the three items. These data answer the question on the television habits and experiences of the preschool child by monitoring group.

Lastly, the demographic data were collated and presented, to describe the sample of the study. The demographic data were divided according to monitoring group to further assist in interpreting the findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter includes a description of the sample used and findings related to the amount and characteristics of parental monitoring efforts, the patterning of aggressive behavior, similarities and differences in aggressive behavior, and the television habits and experiences of the children.

Characteristics of the Sample

The sample consisted of 31 children, 15 females and 16 males. Their ages ranged from three years to five years three months of age (see Table 2). The average age for the sample was four years one month. The 31 subjects constituted three groups of children based on their parental monitoring scores. There were 16 subjects in the high-monitored group, 11 subjects in the moderate-monitored group and four subjects in the low-monitored group. The high-monitored group consisted of seven females and nine males; the moderate-monitored group consisted of six females and five males; and, the low-monitored group consisted of two females and two males. The age range and average age of the children in the high-monitored group was three years to four years eleven months and three years nine months, respectively; in the

moderate-monitored group, it was three years to five years three months and four years three months, respectively; and, in the low-monitored group, it was three years seven months to four years eleven months and four years two months, respectively.

Table 2. Age and Sex Distribution of Children by Monitoring Group (N = 31).

Monitoring Group	Frequency	Age Range (Yrs.-Mos.)	Sex M	Sex F
Low	4	3-7 to 4-11	2	2
Moderate	11	3-0 to 5-3	5	6
High	16	3-0 to 4-11	9	7

The ethnic distribution of subjects consisted of 19 whites, one American Indian, three Blacks, four Orientals and four Hispanics (see Table 3). The ethnic distribution of the three groups of children was ten Whites, two Blacks, one Oriental and three Hispanics in the high-monitored group; six Whites, one American Indian, one Black, two Oriental and one Hispanic in the moderate-monitored group; and, three Whites and one Oriental in the low-monitored group. The largest percentage of Whites, Blacks and Hispanics was in the high-monitored group and the largest percentage of American Indians and Orientals was in the moderate-monitored group.

Table 3. Frequency and Percent of Ethnic Distribution of Children by Monitoring Group (N = 31).

Monitoring Group (No.)	White		American Indian		Black		Oriental		Hispanic	
	F*	P*	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Low (4)	3	9.7	0	0	0	0	1	3.2	0	0
Moderate (11)	6	19.3	1	3.2	1	3.2	2	6.5	1	3.2
High (16)	10	32.3	0	0	2	6.5	1	3.2	3	9.7
Total	19	61.3	1	3.2	3	9.7	4	12.9	4	12.9

* F = Frequency; P = Percent.

Socioeconomic status was determined on the basis of occupation held by the husband or, in the case of a single mother, by her occupation. C. Wright Mill's operational approach to a definition of class through occupational function (1951) and August B. Hollingshead's occupational classification (1958) were used to differentiate "blue-collar" from "white-collar" occupations.

The socioeconomic distribution of subjects showed that slightly over one-fourth of the subjects were children of parents with "blue-collar" occupations and the remaining were children of parents with "white-collar" occupations. The socioeconomic distribution of the three groups of children was five "blue-collar" and 11 "white-collar" families in the high-monitored group; two "blue-collar" and eight

"white-collar" families in the moderate-monitored group; and, one "blue-collar" and three "white-collar" families in the low-monitored group. The highest percentage of both "blue-collar" and "white-collar" families were in the high-monitored group. These data are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Socioeconomic Distribution of Children by Monitoring Group (N = 30)*.

Monitoring Group (No.)	"Blue-Collar" Frequency	"Blue-Collar" Percent	"White-Collar" Frequency	"White-Collar" Percent
Low (4)	1	3.3	3	10.0
Moderate (10)	2	6.7	8	26.6
High (16)	5	16.7	11	36.7
Total	8	26.7	22	73.3

* No response from one respondent in the moderate-monitored group on socioeconomic status.

Slightly over one-third of the subjects were children of mothers who are college students; one-fourth of the low-monitored group and slightly over one-third of the moderate and high-monitored groups were children of mothers who are college students.

Findings

This section will describe the findings concerning the amount and characteristics of parental monitoring effort of the three groups of parents, the patterning of aggressive behavior of preschool children, the similarities and differences in aggressive behavior between the three groups of children when parents have highly, moderately and only minimally monitored their television viewing, and the television habits and experiences of the children (amount of time, types of programs and favorite programs).

Parental Monitoring

Amount of parental monitoring effort was measured by the analysis of the responses to the last four items on the parental questionnaire. As has been previously stated, on each of the four questions, a maximum raw score of 100 points was possible for a total, maximum raw score of 400 for all four questions. Each of the 31 subjects was placed, according to their aggregate score, in one of three groups: low-monitored (0-134 points); moderate-monitored (134-266 points); or, high-monitored (266-400 points) (see Table 5). This arithmetic division of raw scores by thirds was developed because the range of points naturally fell into three discrete groups with demarcations at 130 points, 250 points, and 398 points, respectively, for the three groups of children.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Parental Monitoring Scores (N = 31).

Monitoring Group	Range of Raw Score (Pts.)	Number Of Parents	Group Mean Score (Pts.)
Low (0-134 pts.)	95-130	4	112.5
Moderate (134-266 pts.)	180-250	11	226.6
High (266-400 pts.)	270-398	16	308.4

Mean scores of parental monitoring effort were then computed from the raw scores for each group for each of the four questions. In comparing the high-monitored group with the low-monitored group, the one characteristic of the high-monitored group that was clearly shown was that the parent(s) explained the meaning and/or content of the television programs to their child seven times more frequently than those of the low-monitored group. Another characteristic, less clear-cut but nonetheless notable, was that the parents of the high-monitored group determined the number of hours that their child could watch television almost three times more frequently than those of the low-monitored group. In comparing the moderate-monitored group with the low-monitored group, the characteristic of explaining the meaning and/or content of the television program to their child was almost

five times more often performed by the moderate-monitored group than by the low-monitored group of parents. No noteworthy differences in monitoring characteristics were found between the high-monitored and moderate-monitored groups (see Table 6).

Table 6. Group Mean Scores of Parental Monitoring for Questions 4 through 7 on Parental Questionnaire (N = 31).

Question	Low-Monitoring	Moderate-Monitoring	High-Monitoring
4. Watch T.V. with child	27.5	48.2	61.3
5. Explain meaning and/or content	8.75	42.3	62.4
6. Determine programs	42.5	72.0	94.2
7. Determine number of hours	33.75	64.1	90.5
Monitoring Group Mean	112.5	226.6	308.4

Patterning of Aggressive Behavior

As has been previously stated, each child was observed for a five-minute period during free play after an act of behavioral aggression was committed. The number of acts of aggression and type performed by each child were then recorded on the Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors

(see Appendix B). The tallymarks on the Checklist were then counted for physical and for verbal aggression, separately, and then summed to obtain a total aggression score for each child. A physical, verbal and total aggression score was then computed for each of the three groups of children - high, moderate and low-monitored - by summing all of the children's scores in their respective group.

Acts of physical aggression ranged from two to eight in the low-monitored group, zero to eight in the moderate-monitored group and one to eight in the high-monitored group. Acts of verbal aggression ranged from two to seven in the low-monitored group, one to eight in the moderate-monitored group and one to nine in the high-monitored group. Acts of total aggression ranged from 4 to 15 in the low-monitored group, 2 to 15 in the moderate-monitored group and 3 to 17 in the high-monitored group. These data are shown in Table 7.

All children in the low and high-monitored groups engaged in acts of both physical and verbal aggression. Two children in the moderate-monitored group did not display any acts of physical aggression, but all children engaged in acts of verbal aggression.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Aggressive Behaviors (N = 31).

Monitoring Group	Number of Child Subjects	Sex M	Sex F	Range of Acts of Physical Aggression	Range of Acts of Verbal Aggression	Range of Acts of Total Aggression
Low	4	2	2	2-8	2-7	4-15
Moderate	11	6	5	0-8	1-8	2-15
High	16	8	8	1-8	1-9	3-17

Mean scores of acts of behavioral aggression (physical, verbal, and total aggression) were then computed. The low-monitored group had 10 mean acts of total aggression, while the moderate-monitored group had 6.8 and the high-monitored group had 8.9. The average acts of physical aggression revealed that the low-monitored group had 5, the moderate-monitored group had 2.5 and the high-monitored group had 4.4. Lastly, the low-monitored group had an average of 5 acts of verbal aggression, while the moderate-monitored group had 4.3 and the high-monitored group had 4.5. Generally, there was little difference in the frequency with which physical and verbal aggression was evidenced per group, except for the low physical aggression of the moderate-monitored group in comparison to the verbal aggression. These data are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Group Mean Scores of Aggressive Behavior (N = 31).

Monitoring Group	Number of Subjects	Physical Aggression	Verbal Aggression	Total Aggression
Low	4	5	5	10
Moderate	11	2.5	4.3	6.8
High	16	4.4	4.5	8.9

The results suggested that parental monitoring made a difference in the scores between the high and low-monitored groups, but this did not hold true for the moderate-monitored group. On the measures of average acts of total, physical, and verbal aggression, the low-monitored group scored higher than the moderate and high-monitored groups, but the high-monitored group scored higher than the moderate-monitored group.

Similarities and Differences in Aggressive Behavior

The frequency and percentage of occurrence for each of the eight items of physical aggression (see Table 9) and the 10 items of verbal aggression (see Table 10) were then computed for the group and the characteristics of the differences and similarities between the three groups were then described using percentages. The results suggested that parental monitoring made a difference in the behavioral aggression of the children.

Comparisons of the frequency and percentage of occurrence of physical acts of behavioral aggression for the three groups of children showed that on five of the eight items of the Observation Checklist of Aggressive Behaviors, the low-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group (annoys, teases, interferes; hits, strikes; snatches/damages others' property; negativism; pushes, pulls, holds) (see Table 8). On one of the eight items, there was no difference in the scores (pursues) and on two of the items, the high-monitored group scored higher than the low-monitored group (competes for status; threatening gestures).

In comparing the low-monitored group with the moderate-monitored group, the results showed that, on six of the eight items, the low-monitored group scored higher than the moderate-monitored group (annoys, teases, interferes; hits, strikes; threatening gestures; pursues; snatches/damages others' property; pushes, pulls, holds) and only on two items did the moderate-monitored group score higher than the low-monitored group (competes for status; negativism).

In comparing the moderate-monitored group with the high-monitored group, the scores indicated that only on one of the eight items did the moderate-monitored group score higher than the high-monitored group (negativism). On the other seven items, the moderate-monitored group scored lower than the high-monitored group (annoys, teases, interferes; hits, strikes; competes for status; threatening gestures;

pursues; snatches/damages others' property; pushes, pulls, holds).

In summary, on five of the eight items, the low-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group, while the moderate-monitored group scored lower than the high-monitored group on four items and higher on one item. A trend was therefore observed on five out of the eight items for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group on physical acts of aggression when the moderate group scores were not considered.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Occurrence of Acts of Physical Aggression for Each of 8 Items (N = 31).

Item	Low-Monitored Group (N = 4)		Moderate-Monitored Group (N = 11)		High-Monitored Group (N = 16)	
	F*	P*	F	P	F	P
1-Annoys, teases, interferes	4	100%	5	46%	12	75%
2-Hits, strikes	3	75%	2	18%	8	50%
3-Competes for status	1	25%	4	36%	7	44%
4-Threatening gestures	2	50%	2	18%	12	75%
5-Pursues	2	50%	2	18%	8	50%
6-Snatches/damages others' property	3	75%	3	27%	8	50%
7-Negativism	2	50%	6	55%	7	44%
8-Pushes, pulls, holds	3	75%	4	36%	8	50%

* F = Frequency; P = Percent.

Comparison of the raw scores of the frequency and percentage of occurrence of verbal acts of behavioral aggression for the three groups of children showed that the low-monitored group scored higher than the high and moderate-monitored groups on six of the ten items (commands, demands; cross-purposes; disparages; refuses to comply; rejects; claims possession; threatens), no scores recorded for one item (injury via agent), scored lower than the high and moderate-monitored groups on two items (shifts blame; tattles), and scored higher than the moderate-monitored, but lower than the high-monitored, group on one item (cross-purposes) (see Table 10).

In comparing the moderate-monitored group with the high-monitored group, the scores indicated that on four of the ten items, the moderate-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group (disparages; rejects; claims possession; threatens), no scores recorded on one item (injury via agent) and on five items, the moderatemonitored group scored lower than the high-monitored group (commands, demands; cross-purposes; refuses to comply; shifts blame; tattles) (see Table 10).

In summary, on six of the ten items, the low-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group, when the moderate-monitored group scored lower than the high-monitored group on two items; no scores recorded on one item; and on three items, the low and moderate-monitored groups

scored lower than the high-monitored group. A trend was therefore observed on seven out of the nine items with recorded scores for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group on verbal acts of aggression when the moderate-monitored group scores were not considered.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Occurrence of Acts of Verbal Aggression for Each of 10 Items (N = 31).

Item	Low-Monitored Group (N = 4)		Moderate-Monitored Group (N = 11)		High-Monitored Group (N = 16)	
	F*	P*	F	P	F	P
1-Commands, demands	4	100%	7	64%	12	75%
2-Cross-purposes	3	75%	8	73%	13	80%
3-Disparages	3	75%	7	64%	10	63%
4-Injury via agent	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5-Refuses to comply	1	25%	1	9%	3	19%
6-Rejects	3	75%	6	55%	8	50%
7-Shifts blame	1	25%	3	27%	6	38%
8-Tattles	0	0%	2	18%	4	25%
9-Claims possession	3	75%	8	73%	9	56%
10-Threatens	2	50%	5	46%	7	44%

* F = Frequency; P = Percent.

Television Habits and Experiences of the Children

The 31 subjects in the study watched an average of 3.2 hours of television per day, with a range of 1.3 to 6.5

hours per day. In comparing the three groups of children (high, moderate, and low-monitored groups) on the number of hours they watch television per day, the results showed that the low-monitored group watched an average of 4.0 hours of television per day, the moderate-monitored group 3.2 hours and the high-monitored group 3.0 hours. The range for the three groups of children was 2.5 hours to 5.0 hours per day for the low-monitored group, 1.3 hours to 6.5 hours for the moderate-monitored group and 1.5 hours to 4.0 hours for the high-monitored group. These data are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Television Viewing Time (N = 31).

Monitoring Group	Frequency	Range of Number of Hours/Day	Mean Hours/Day
Low	4	2.5-5.0	4.0
Moderate	11	1.3-6.5	3.2
High	16	1.5-4.0	3.0

Rank order comparisons between monitoring groups (high, moderate and low groups) on the types of television programs that were viewed showed no differences in the viewing patterns with the exception that the high-monitored group watched more educational television programs and less adventure programs than the other two groups. Cartoons were

the "most watched" genre of shows of all four groups of children. These data are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Rank Order of Types of Television Programs Viewed (N = 22).

Monitoring Group (No.)	Adventure	Situation Comedy	Cartoon	Soap Opera	Educational
Low (4)	2	4	1	5	3
Moderate (9)	2	4	1	5	3
High (9)	3	4	1	5	2

In comparing the favorite television programs of the three monitoring groups (high, moderate and low groups), no differences were found in their preferences of programs, by type, between the three groups. The results indicated that the favorite programs of all three groups were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs.

In comparing the favorite top five television programs by monitoring group against the National Coalition on Television Violence's survey on the most violent shows on prime time and Saturday morning children's shows (San Diego Evening Tribune, June 17, 1981), the low-monitored group preferred three out of five mentioned shows; the

moderate-monitored group two out of five; and, the high-monitored group one out of five.

Summary of Findings

1. Comparison of mean scores of parental monitoring effort showed that parents of the high and moderate-monitored groups explained the meaning and/or content of television programs to their child much more frequently than those of the low-monitored group. Additionally, parents of the high-monitored groups determined the number of hours that their child could watch television much more frequently than those of the low-monitored group. No differences in monitoring effort were noted between the high and moderate-monitored groups.
2. Comparison of mean number of acts of behavioral aggression (physical, verbal and total aggression) showed that the low-monitored group scored higher than the moderate and high-monitored groups, but the high-monitored group scored higher than the moderate-monitored group. Generally, there was little difference in the frequency with which physical and verbal aggression was evidenced per group, except for the low physical

aggression of the moderate-monitored group in comparison to the verbal aggression.

3. Comparison of the raw scores of the frequency and percentage of occurrence of physical acts of aggression showed a trend on five out of the eight items for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group when the moderate-monitored group scores were not considered. The low-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group on five of the eight items and higher than the moderatemonitored group on six of the eight items. The moderate-monitored group only scored higher than the high-monitored group on one of the eight items.
4. Comparison of the raw scores of the frequency and percentage of occurrence of verbal acts of aggression showed a trend on six out of the nine items with recorded scores for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group when the moderate-monitored group scores were not considered. The low-monitored group scored higher than the high and moderate-monitored groups on six of the nine items with recorded scores. The moderate-monitored group scored higher than the high-monitored group on four of the nine items with recorded scores.

5. Comparison of the television habits and experiences of the three groups of children showed that the low-monitored group watched more television per day than the moderate-monitored group and the moderate-monitored group watched more than the high-monitored group. Overall, television viewing was high. Rank order comparisons between monitoring groups of the types of programs viewed showed no differences in the viewing patterns with the exception that the high-monitored group watched more educational television programs and less adventure programs from the other two groups. Cartoons were the "most watched" type of show of all three groups of children. In comparing the favorite programs of the monitoring groups, no differences were found in their preferences of programs by type. The favorite programs of all three groups were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs. In comparing the favorite top five television programs by group against the most violent shows on television, the low-monitored group preferred three out of five; the moderate-monitored group two out of five; and, the high-monitored group one out of five.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the conclusions of this study will be discussed. The results of the study in relation to the statement of the problem and the relationship to the conceptual orientation and literature review are presented. Field problems, implications and recommendations for further study will also be discussed.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were derived from the data presented in the preceding pages:

1. In comparing the three groups of children on parental monitoring effort, several noteworthy differences were found. Parents of children in the high-monitored group explained the meaning and/or content of the television programs to their children seven times more frequently and also determined the number of hours that their children could watch television almost three times more frequently than those parents of children in the low-monitored group. Parents of children in the moderate-monitored group explained the meaning and/or content of the

television programs to their children almost five times more frequently than those parents of children in the low-monitored group. Overall, for the entire sample, parental monitoring efforts were high.

2. The findings were inconclusive but suggest the existence of a positive trend that parental monitoring may make a difference in the mean number of acts of behavioral aggression of the three groups of children. Difference was found in the scores between the low and moderate-monitored groups and the low and high-monitored groups but this did not hold true between the moderate and high-monitored groups.
3. The findings were inconclusive but suggest the existence of a positive trend that parental monitoring may make a difference in the frequency of occurrence of acts of behavioral aggression of the three groups of children. Difference was found in the physical and verbal behavioral aggression scores between the low and moderate-monitored groups and the low and high-monitored groups, but this did not hold true between the moderate and high-monitored groups.
4. In comparing the television habits and experiences of the three groups of children, some

noteworthy differences and similarities were found. The low-monitored group watched an average of four hours of television per day, the moderate-monitored group 3.2 hours, and the high-monitored group three hours. Rank order comparisons between the three monitoring groups on the type of television programs that were viewed showed no differences in the viewing patterns, with the exception that the high-monitored group watched more educational television programs and less adventure programs than the low and moderate-monitored groups. In comparing the favorite television programs of the three monitoring groups, no differences were found in their preferences of programs by type. The favorite programs of all three groups were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs. Many of the programs the children watched and indicated a preference for are among the most violent programs on television.

Similarities and Differences in Parental Monitoring Effort

Numerous studies have found that parents place very few restrictions on their children's television viewing, even in the preschool years (Friedrick and Stein 1973; Lyle and Hoffman 1972b; Stein and Friedrich 1972), while various

researchers have reported that a few parents do routinely attempt to exercise control over television viewing in their home (Albert and Meline 1958; Hess and Goldman 1962; Streicher and Bonney 1974). In those homes where control is exercised, parental guidance is typically aimed at programs aired during family viewing hours and entails restrictions against watching specific programs, special hours for viewing, restriction of the total amount of viewing time or selection of which programs their children could watch.

This investigation found that four out of 31 subjects (13 percent) were minimally monitored; 11 out of 31 subjects (35 percent) were moderately monitored; and, 16 out of 31 subjects (52 percent) were highly monitored. In comparing each of the monitoring characteristics by group, it was found that the parents of the high-monitored group explained the meaning and/or content of the television programs to their child seven times more frequently than those of the low-monitored group and also determined the number of hours that their child could watch television almost three times more frequently. In comparing the moderate-monitored group with the low-monitored group, the characteristic of explaining the meaning and/or content of the television programs to their child was almost five times more often performed by the moderate-monitored group parents.

It would appear that in the time lapse since the earlier studies were carried out that larger numbers of

parents have become aware of the possible adverse effects of indiscriminate television viewing on their chidlren and are attempting to exercise control and guidance, particularly in the areas of total number of hours that their children can watch television and explaining to their children the content and/or meaning of the programs that the children are watching. This could be due, in large part, to the great deal of attention given to the possible adverse effects of television viewing on young children over the past five years in newspapers and magazines. The concern and efforts of such groups as the National Coalition on Television Violence, Action for Children's Television, the Parent-Teachers Association, the American Medical Association and the Committee on Social Issues of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry are largely responsible.

The findings of this study that the largest percentage of "blue-collar" and black families were in the high-monitored group are at odds with Blood's findings (1961) that lower class and black children have greater control over their own television viewing and supports Lyle and Hoffman's contention (1972a) that socioeconomic status does not predict as strongly as it did in earlier studies. Singer and Singer (1981) state that socioeconomic status and ethnicity appear to be less influential factors in producing overt aggression in children than is the sheer amount of time spent watching television and, in particular, the time spent watching the

action-detective-adventure shows that are characterized by considerable violent activity. However, there are limitations to this investigator's data, due to small sample size and the small numbers of ethnic groups represented in the sample.

Patterning of Aggressive Behavior

There is little available evidence from the literature that parents consciously carry out monitoring activities, i.e., control actual viewing; cultivate program preferences; comment on specific content as it is shown; react when their children later act out things they have seen; and help their children to discern the reality and relevance of what they are seeing. A review of the literature, however, does indicate that when adults, parents and other authority figures do engage in monitoring activities, they can influence and change a young child's attitudes and behavior (Mallick and McCandless 1966; Hicks 1968; McLeod, Atkins, and Chaffee 1972a & 1972b; Linne 1971; Ball and Bogatz 1970; O'Bryant and Corder-Bolz 1978; Grusec 1973; Horton and Santogrossi 1978).

The findings of this investigation were inconclusive but suggest the existence of a positive trend that parental monitoring may make a difference in the mean number of acts of behavioral aggression of the three groups of children (high, moderate and low-monitored). Parental monitoring made

a difference in the scores between the low and moderate-monitored groups and the low and high-monitored groups but this did not hold true between the moderate and high- monitored groups. Generally, there was little difference in the frequency with which physical and verbal aggression was evidenced per group except for the low physical aggression of the moderate-monitored group in comparison to the verbal aggression. This finding is supported by the Walters, Pearce, and Dahms (1957) study that found that three and five-year-old girls were more verbally than physically aggressive and that at the five-year age level, there was a tendency for the children to express their aggression verbally rather than physically.

Analysis of the frequency distribution of aggressive behavior scores for the moderate and high-monitored groups provided the following findings which could explain the lower physical versus verbal aggression of the moderate-monitored group, as well as the overall lower aggression (both verbal and physical) of the moderatemonitored group, in comparison to the high-monitored group. There were only three five-year-olds in the sample (two females and one male) and all were in the moderate-monitored group and all were more verbally aggressive than physically aggressive, as was the one three-year-old female in the moderate-monitored group. Additionally, the girls were more physically and less verbally aggressive than the boys, overall, in the moderate-monitored

group. This finding is the opposite of that found in numerous previous studies (Sears, Rau, and Alpert 1965; Muste and Sharp 1947; Jersild and Markey 1935; Green 1933; Dawe 1934; Siegel 1956). Lastly, the boys were more aggressive, both verbally and physically, than the girls in the high-monitored group, overall. The previously cited studies found that boys were more physically aggressive and girls were more verbally aggressive.

Similarities and Differences in the Physical and Verbal Aggression of the Children

Although the literature dealing with aggressive behavior in children is extensive, little actually pertains to or originates from developmental theory. Age changes in the aggressive behavior of children have been documented in only a few studies, i.e., Feshbach (1970) and Hartup (1974). About all that can be said about age changes, in the form of human aggressive behavior, is that, from two through six years of age, there is an increase in the use of language in aggressive outbursts. Several studies show greater verbal aggression in girls than in boys (Jersild and Markey 1935; Muste and Sharp 1947; Sears, Rau, and Alpert 1965). The common finding that boys display significantly more anti-social aggression that girls in the nursery school has been replicated numerous times in studies (Green 1933; Dawe 1934; Siegel 1956; Sears, Rau, and Alpert 1965). Numerous studies have cited increasing age as being positively related to the

frequency of aggressive behavior during the preschool years (Bridges 1931; Murphy 1937; Muste and Sharp 1947; Walters, Pearce, and Dahms 1957).

In comparing the three monitoring groups of children on frequency of occurrence of physical acts of behavioral aggression, the low-monitored group scored higher than the moderate-monitored group on six of eight items, higher than the high-monitored group on five of eight items but the moderate-monitored group only scored higher than the high-monitored group on one of eight items. This could possibly be accounted for by the fact that the high-monitored group has the largest number of males of any of the groups. From the previously cited literature, a common finding is that boys display significantly more antisocial aggression than girls in the preschool age group. With the exception of the moderate-monitored group, a trend was observed for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group on five of eight items of physical aggression. This would suggest that parental monitoring may make a difference in the physical behavioral aggression of the children.

In comparing the three monitoring groups of children on frequency of occurrence of verbal acts of aggression, the low-monitored group scored higher than the high and moderate-monitored groups on six of nine items, but the moderate-monitored group only scored higher than the high-monitored group on four of nine items (one item had no recorded scores

for any of the groups). With the exception of the moderate-monitored group, a trend was therefore observed for the low-monitored group to score higher than the high-monitored group on verbal aggression. This would suggest that parental monitoring may make a difference in the verbal behavioral aggression of the children.

Similarities and Differences in the Television Habits and Experiences of the Children

The question of children's exposure to aggressive modeling through television may be considered in terms of two components: 1) How much available television programming provides such modeling? 2) How much time do children spend in exposure to such content?

Violence is very prevalent in television drama. The highest incidence of violence occurs in action-type programs (crimes, adventure, western drama and cartoons) and these have been a substantial component of network programming. Programs directed at children have typically scored high on most measures of violence except for killing. Cartoons have consistently exceeded all other catagories of programs, including action-type, in number of violent episodes per hour. Considerable violence occurs in a comic or humorous context. Comic programs are far from violence-free and comic cartoons are about as violent as adventure and super hero cartoons (Gerbner and Gross 1976; Gerbner et al. 1977). An average of five acts of violence per prime-time hour and four

times that number per weekend-daytime hour have been reported (Gerbner, Gross et al. 1980).

An A. C. Nielsen Company survey of viewing habits during the 1980-81 television season shows a modest increase in the number of hours that the average American household watches per day, record of six hours and 44 minutes, compared to six hours and 35 minutes during 1979-80 (San Diego Union T.V. Week, May 9-15, 1982). For the 1981-82 television season, we watched more than ever an average of six hours and 48 minutes per day (T.V. Guide, June 4-10, 1983). The frequency with which children are exposed to violent content has been variously reported as two to three hours per day (Lyle and Hoffman 1972; Murray 1972; Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961), 30 hours per week in a 1977 A. C. Nielsen Study (Banks 1980), 29 hours per week (Comstock et al. 1978) and 27 hours per week by Peggy Charren of Action for Children's Television (1981). This investigation found that the 31 subjects in the study watched an average of 3.2 hours of television per day. In comparing the three groups of children, the low-monitored group watched an average of 4.0 hours of television per day, the moderate-monitored group 3.2 hours and the high-monitored group 3.0 hours. These findings are all in keeping with the above-reported findings.

High violence programs are among young children's favorites. In the Lyle and Hoffman study (1972), for example, first-grade children were found to prefer programs

of the sort heavily saturated with violence. Twenty-four percent of the children said cartoons were their favorite type of program, while another 13 percent selected detective and "hip adventure" programs as their favorites. A similar pattern was found in Stein et al.'s (1971) study of preschoolers, whose parents reported that they watched cartoons an average of more than seven hours per week. Even adult violent programs were watched more than a full hour per week by these three to five-year-old children. Another study, McCall et al. (1977), found that educational programs and family situation shows were "most watched" by three-year-old children. This investigation found that cartoons were the "most watched" genre of shows of all three groups of children. Comparisons between the three monitoring groups on types of television programs viewed showed no difference in the viewing patterns, with the exception that the high-monitored group watched more educational television programs and less adventure programs than the other two groups. Singer and Singer (1981) found that those children who are more likely to watch educational television shows are somewhat less likely to be aggressive.

A. C. Nielsen found that the majority of top-ten-rated shows among two to five-year-olds in 1969 and 1973 were found in the Saturday day-part telecasts (cartoons and educational programming). In 1977, everyone's favorites were prime-time situation comedies and adventure programs (Banks

1980). McCall et al. (1977) found that cartoons were rarely mentioned as a favorite program. During the 1980-81 television season, the A. C. Nielsen survey found situation comedies the most popular genre of shows, followed by feature films, general drama and suspense dramas. According to the A. C. Nielsen Company, in 1982 situation comedy slipped to third place behind feature films and mystery/suspense dramas as the most popular forms of television programs (T.V. Guide, June 11-17, 1983). During this survey period, children two to 11 years of age preferred: "Dukes of Hazzard," "Greatest American Hero," "Walt Disney," "Smurfs II" and "Incredible Hulk" (San Diego Union T.V. Week, May 9-15, 1982). According to the National Coalition on Television Violence's 1981 report, some of these are among the most violent shows on television (San Diego Evening Tribune, June 17, 1981). In comparing the favorite programs of the three groups of children in this study, no differences were found in their preferences of programs by type. The favorite programs of all three groups of children were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs. In comparing the top five favorite television programs by monitoring group against the National Coalition on Television Violence's survey on the most violent shows on prime-time and Saturday morning children's shows, the low-monitored group preferred three out of five mentioned shows; the moderate-monitored group two out of five; and, the high-monitored group one out

of five. Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, and Huesmann (1977) found that "the greater was a boy's preference for violent television at age nine, the greater was his aggressiveness both at that time and ten years later " (pp. 115-116).

Summary of the Conceptual Orientation in Relation to the Conclusions

The Social Learning Theory of Aggression which considers the learning experiences of the child to be the primary determinants of his/her aggressive behavior suggests two principal mechanisms by which the child acquires aggressive responses: selective reinforcement, resulting in rewards for being aggressive; and imitation or modeling, whereby the child may acquire aggressive response tendencies without being specifically reinforced for an aggressive act but merely by observing aggressive adult and peer models. Numerous studies on the imitation of live or film-mediated models have been presented. Their results show that preschool-aged children do imitate the aggressive behavior of adults and peers whether observed live or on film; that the imitation in young children often takes the form of rather direct imitation, even of novel aggressive responses; that the observation by young children of film-mediated aggressive play leads to subsequent imitation, especially if the model is rewarded or neither rewarded nor punished and if no disapproval of the adult's behavior is provided by adults in the child's presence; that aggressive responding increases

with observation; that children learn more from observing aggression than they ordinarily are willing to display; and, that there may be evidence of retention and performance of imitative response after a very substantial time lapse, indicating long-term imitative effects after observation of film-mediated aggression by young children.

Our present knowledge of child development indicates that the preschool years are the most important years in the development of learning abilities and also the age group particularly susceptible to and at risk from television's effects because of their immaturity in cognitive development, their sense of reality, ability to use logic and socialization experiences are lacking.

The effects of mass media depend, in large part, on the frequency with which various audiences are exposed to them, as well as the content of the programs viewed. Previously cited literature provides evidence that violence is very prevalent in television programs viewed by children and that children spend a great deal of time watching television. The results of this study support these findings.

Review of the literature shows that parents place very few restrictions on their children's television viewing, even in the preschool years, but when controls are exercised, they seem to have some effect in the early years. Additionally, when adults play an active, interpretive role, they can significantly moderate television's impact on the

behavior of children. The results of this study showed that, overall, parental monitoring efforts were high. Parents of children in the high-monitored group explained the meaning and/or content of the television programs their children viewed much more frequently than the parents of the children in the moderate and low-monitored groups. In addition, parents of children in the high-monitored group determined the number of hours that their children could watch television much more frequently than did parents of children in the low-monitored group. The findings of this study were inconclusive but suggest the existence of a positive trend that parental monitoring may make a difference in the number of mean acts of behavioral aggression and in the frequency of occurrence of acts of behavioral aggression of the three groups of children.

Field Problems

Several methodological problems were identified in the study. Of the 50 possible child subjects who met the criteria for inclusion in the study, only 31 chose to participate (62 percent of available subjects). This small sample size was further reduced, when the subjects were placed in the appropriate monitoring group, to only four subjects in the low-monitored group, 11 subjects in the moderate-monitored group and 16 subjects in the high-monitored group.

Several problems were identified in regard to the setting in which the data collection took place, a Child Development Laboratory of a community college, and the subjects themselves. Approximately three-fourths of the subjects were children of parents who have "white-collar" occupations. Additionally, slightly over one-third of the subjects were children of mothers who are presently students at the college. Also, parents of each newly admitted child are required to enroll in a parenting course for one semester at the college. The subjects, therefore, are typically middle-class, educated and possess additional parenting skills. This may mean that the sample is a select one, as well as small in size.

Implications

The findings of this study were inconclusive, but suggest the existence of a positive trend that parental television monitoring may make a difference in the behavioral aggression of the preschool child.

Overall, amount of parental monitoring was high and was characterized by explaining programs and determining viewing time; the children watched a lot of television; there was not much difference in viewing patterns between the three groups of children; and, many of the shows that the children watched are among the most violent on television. With the exception of parents frequently and consciously carrying out

monitoring activities, previously mentioned literature supports these findings.

The findings of this study support the view that there needs to be an increased awareness on the part of parents of the insidious and overt effects of television on the preschool-aged child. A concentrated effort needs to be made by parents on behalf of their children to reduce the amount of television viewing, view what is appropriate and participate in the child's viewing experience by monitoring what is watched, sharing the process of watching, offering explanations, helping to separate fact from fiction, real from imaginary. Action for Children's Television, an articulate public interest group long concerned about the deleterious effects of prolonged or inappropriate viewing, has made recommendations which they summarize in a poster, Treat T.V. with T.L.C.: Talk about T.V. with your child, look at T.V. with your child, and choose T.V. programs with your child, (The Committee on Social Issues Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, p. 113).

Nurses can play an important role in parent education and anticipatory guidance to parents of preschool-aged children. Beyond this, nurses bear the responsibility, along with other health care professionals, to share our knowledge of child development and the special needs of children with the broader public and to participate in public dialogue about television as a psychosocial issue. For the future, it

is hoped that a mobilized public concern and a more enlightened public will influence those who are responsible for television programming to offer more benign, creative and socially constructive programming for all children.

Recommendations For Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research were made:

1. Similar studies should be carried out in different preschools, more representative of the cross-section of society, with a larger sample size, controlling more closely for age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, and television habits and experience of the children.
2. The study should be done with two or more five-minute observation periods with a time lapse in-between to find out if aggression levels vary within that period.
3. A longitudinal study, correlating age changes in aggressive behavior during the preschool and school age years, needs to be done.
4. Investigation into the environmental circumstances and psychological processes on which any effect of television violence or aggressive behavior is contingent needs to be done. Furthermore, the variables that determine whether any

aggression at all will occur and what its strength will be and the conditions, including aspects of the television stimuli, as well as environmental factors, that might mitigate any contribution by television to the likelihood of aggressive behavior, need to be investigated (Comstock and Lindsey 1975).

5. Investigation of the degree to which any effects of television violence on aggression may be attributable, not to type of program content, such as violence or humor, but the medium's ability to excite and arouse, thereby indicating that nonviolent arousing content may stimulate aggressive behavior (Comstock and Lindsey 1975).

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The problem of this investigation was to study the relationship of parental television monitoring and children's aggressive behavior. Four specific questions for the study were:

1. What are the amount and characteristics of parental monitoring effort for television viewing of preschool children?
2. What is the patterning of aggressive behavior of preschool children?
3. What are the similarities and differences in "expressed" behavioral acts of aggression, between children, when parents have monitored their television viewing and when they have not?
4. What are the television habits and experiences of preschool children?

The conceptual orientation for the study was based on the social learning theory of aggesssion, imitation/modeling, selective reinforcement, television violence, the television experience of the child, characteristics of aggressive/ cognitive development, and parental monitoring.

The selected review of the literature contained studies pertaining to observational learning and aggressive behavior, the effect of viewing live, filmed or televised aggression on children's aggressive behavior and the effects of monitoring efforts on the regulation of aggressive behavior.

The sample consisted of 31 preschool students (15 female and 16 male) who ranged in age from three years to five years three months of age. Subjects were observed for a five-minute period during episodes of free play in the preschool setting after an incident of behavioral aggression. Prior to the observation period, a questionnaire was completed by parents to ascertain degree of television monitoring effort, the child's television habits and viewing experience, and certain demographic data.

The findings were inconclusive. The data analyses suggest that there were positive indications that parental monitoring may make a difference in the mean number of acts of behavioral aggression and the frequency of occurrence of acts of behavioral aggression of the three groups of children. Parents of children in the high and moderate-monitored groups explained the meaning and/or content of the television programs to their children significantly more often than those parents of children in the low-monitored group. In addition, parents of children in the high-monitored group determined the number of hours that their children could

watch television significantly more often than those parents of children in the low-monitored group. Overall, parental monitoring efforts were high. In comparing the television habits and experiences of the three groups of children, it was found that television viewing was high, and that there was little difference in viewing patterns with the exception that the high-monitored group watched more educational and less adventure programs than the other two groups. Cartoons were the "most watched" genre of shows. In comparing the favorite television programs of the three groups of children, no differences were found in their preferences of programs by type. The favorite programs of all three groups were cartoons and educational programs, followed by adventure programs. Lastly, many of the programs that the children watched and indicated a preference for are among the most violent programs on television.

Implications were drawn for attempting to reduce television's adverse influence on young children through increased public awareness and parental guidance.

Recommendations for further study included: replication of the study with a larger sample in different preschools with more control of variables; doing the study with two or more five-minute observation periods with a time lag; a longitudinal study correlating age changes in aggressive behavior during the preschool and school age years; investigation into the environmental circumstances and

psychological processes on which any effect of television violence on aggressive behavior is contingent; and, investigation of the degree to which any effects of television violence on aggression may be attributable not to type of program content but to the the medium's ability to excite and arouse.

APPENDIX A

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: Name:

Age: Ethnic Group:

Sex: Family Occupation(s):

1. How many hours per day does your child watch television?

   A. Morning: ___ B. Afernoon: ___ C. Evening: ___
   Total: ___

2. What types of television programs does your child watch? Please check:

   a. ☐ Adventure b. ☐ Situation Comedy

   c. ☐ Cartoons d. ☐ Soap Operas

   e. ☐ Educational

   What percentage of the time? Please indicate below each category.

3. What are the names of your child's favorite television programs?

   a. b.

   c. d.

4. What percentage of the time does your child watch television with you (parents)?

5. What percentage of the time do you (parents) explain the meaning and/or content of the programs to your child?

6. What percentage of the time do you (parents) determine which shows your child will watch?

7. What percentage of the time do you (parents) determine the number of hours your child may watch television?

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

Date: Age:
Name: Sex:

Aggressive Behaviors	Observations
Physical Aggression:	
a. Annoys, teases, interferes;	
b. Hits, strikes;	
c. Competes for status, i.e., attempts to "show up" another by performing better;	
d. Threatening gestures;	
e. Pursues, i.e., runs after or follows with the intent of inflicting a blow;	
f. Snatches or damages property of others;	
g. Negativism, i.e., refuses to work with or conform to the directions of another;	
h. Pushes, pulls, holds.	
Verbal Aggression:	
a. Commands, demands;	
b. Cross-purposes, i.e., conflict over ways of using equipment;	
c. Disparages, i.e., makes remarks indicating dislike for another person, finds fault with or censures or condemns another's behavior, laughs at another's misfortune, mocks, expresses desire that another be the victim of imperious events, attributes bad qualities to another;	
d. Injury via Agent, i.e., entices another person to injure a third person;	
e. Refuses to comply;	
f. Rejects, i.e., denies activity or privilege to another;	
g. Shifts blame;	
h. Tattles;	
i. Claims possession;	
j. Threatens.	

Aggressive categories adapted by Walters, Pearce, and Dahms (1957) from Dr. Jacob L. Gewirtz, University of Chicago (unpublished paper). Format adapted from Davies (1974), University of Arizona (unpublished Master's Thesis).

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Effect of Television Monitoring by Parents on Childhood Aggression

I am requesting your voluntary participation in the completion of this questionnaire and permission for your child to participate in this study.

The purpose and objective of this study is to investigate the similarities and differences in the social behavior of children when parents monitor their television viewing, as compared to the social behavior of children of the same age when parents do not monitor their television viewing.

Your child was selected because he/she is between the ages of three and five years and attends preschool. Your child will be directly observed during spontaneous play at preschool for a five-minute period and sampling of social behavior will be recorded on an observation checklist. There is no cost to you and there are no physical risks or discomforts to your child.

If you decide to participate, please answer as many questions as you are able to answer with confidence. Completion of this questionnaire will indicate your consent as a willing participant in this study. All data received will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality, with access restricted to the principal investigator or authorized representatives of the University of Arizona College of Nursing. You are free to ask questions at any time and to withdraw from the study at any time without incurring ill will. You may see the results of this study at its completion.

Barbara L. Maack
Graduate Student
College of Nursing
University of Arizona

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF NURSING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Barbara L. Maack
168 Hannalei Drive
Vista, California 92083

FROM: Ada Sue Hinshaw, R.N., Ph.D.
Director of Research

Jan R. Atwood, R.N., Ph.D.
Chairman, Research Committee

DATE: March 17, 1983

RE: Human Subjects Review: Effect of Television Monitoring by Parents on Childhood Aggression

Your project has been reviewed and approved as exempt from University review by the College of Nursing Ethical Review Sub-Committee of the Research Committee, and the Director of Research. A consent form with subject signature is not required for projects exempt from full University review. Please use only a disclaimer format for subjects to read before giving their oral consent to the research. The Human Subjects Project Approval Form is filed in the office of the Director of Research, if you need access to it.

We wish you a valuable and stimulating experience with your research.

ASH:des

APPENDIX E

APPROVAL FOR FACILITY USE

MiraCōsta College

One Barnard Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056 Tel. (714) 757-2121

November 10, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

As Director of the Child Development Laboratory, MiraCosta College, I hereby grant permission for Barbara L. Maack, graduate student in nursing, the University of Arizona, to use our facilities for the purpose of direct observation and behavioral sampling of 2½ - 5 year old children as part of her thesis.

Sincerely,

Malathi Sandhu

Malathi Sandhu, Ph.D.
Child Development Coordinator

MS:jb

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