

D. Television

"TV violence does contribute to the belief in and the use of violence as a means to solve inter-personal and personal problems."⁵⁵

116. The age of television presents hazards as well as benefits to the development of the minds and bodies of young children. Young children who spend an average of four hours each day passively watching television could otherwise be actively involved developing their motor skills in the fresh air and at the same time exercising their initiative in play. Lengthy inactivity in their waking hours is not beneficial to their overall development. Probably more dangerous, however, is the threat to their minds posed by the daily viewing of violent acts on television.

117. The research study carried out for the recent Ontario Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry indicated that watching violence on television does influence children in many ways for different reasons.⁵⁶ This study involved children between the ages of five and fourteen years and pointed out that in ten years of viewing, a child could have watched the violent destruction of more than 13,400 characters on television.⁵⁷

118. Several witness referred to the very severe deleterious effects of television on children⁵⁸ and warned that society should not wait for proof of these harmful effects before believing they are probable. "It just doesn't make sense . . . if you want to raise a child who has the capacity for affection and for co-operatively getting along with other human beings, to expose him to something like 17,000 murders on television during his formative years. I gather that is the number the average child watches in the United States."⁵⁹

119. In the United States, studies "show that 22 per cent of all juvenile crime is patterned directly after television programs."⁶⁰ Other studies have shown a correlation between the amount of television watched and the extent of violence in the young:

"The television set is now part of the family and is responsible, as a member of the family, for making the next generation of human beings. It is responsible for their humaneness or inhumaneness."⁶¹

In general, the pre-school child who watches more than one hour of TV at a time can become exhausted. If viewing habits include long hours in front of the set and programs featuring violence, there will come a time when the child may become unable to tell right from wrong. This is true at least up to age seven.⁶²

120. Twenty years ago a distinguished anthropologist evoked an image of "lonely, withdrawn children . . . [who] may spend hours a week in a half trance, alone before a television set, soaking in images of violence and murder."⁶³ Since then the trend toward both parents being