

TELEVISION AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Television, as well as videos, film, DVDs, recorded music, computers and electronic games have a very powerful effect on children and it is very important that children's exposure to them is limited. It can take several days for the effects of a single video to wear off. If children are watching every day, the effects never wear off at all; many children now speak a lot of the time in 'cartoon' voices, make 'sound effects' to accompany their jerky movements (kicking, punching) and compulsively repeat lines from videos they have seen over and over again.

This is now seen as normal childish behaviour, but it comes from these media, not from the children themselves.

In Steiner Waldorf schools, the teaching relies very much on the child taking in the content of a lesson, going home and sleeping and then coming back the next day to recall and work with it. During the night, the lesson will have been digested, together with the mental pictures made by the child himself, and he is able to relate to and understand it better than he could the previous day.

If children are watching TV, or using any of the other electronic devices mentioned, after school or especially just before bed or in the morning, the strong images and noises overwhelm the subtle pictures they have formed within themselves with their own imagination and shut them out, so that the child, when you say 'princess', or 'frog' will only be able to picture Disney's Sleeping Beauty or Kermit from Sesame Street; the opportunity to use his own imagination is denied him.

Young children need real human beings to imitate in order to develop in a healthy way, and if they are exposed to these distorted pictures, sounds and actions on a regular basis they will imitate them instead while their senses gradually become numbed to finer, real human qualities.

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