

Media Exposure and Development of Young Children: Infants and Television

NISHIMURA Noriko

The visual media, particularly television, but also videos and electronic games, have become a firmly established part of the daily life of young children, prompting serious concern about the effects these media have on their mental and physical development. Public interest in this subject is high and considerable discussion is taking place. The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, in collaboration with scholars, in November 2001 launched the “Better Broadcasting for Children” Project aimed to explore the relationship of media exposure to the development of children and foster a healthy information environment for children.¹ The project has two main features:

- Joint research by persons involved in broadcasting working with scholars (of education, psychology, medicine, etc.) to examine the relationship between broadcasting and the psychological and intellectual development of children.
- A long-term survey that follows the development from infancy of the same group of children.

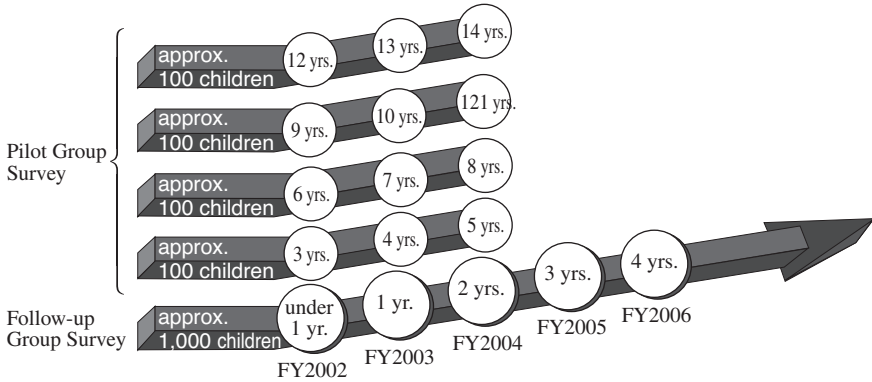
The survey feature of the project consists of two parts (see Figure 1):

Follow-up Group Survey series

This survey is conducted annually with a group of about 1,200 children selected as infants (under 1 year of age) in 2002 to follow their development as they grew up. By analyzing the relationship of their exposure to visual media to development, it aims to evaluate the influence and impact,

¹ The “Better Broadcasting for Children” Project is conducted by the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute in collaboration with the following scholars: Kobayashi Noboru (chair; president emeritus, National Children’s Hospital), Akuto Hiroshi (deputy chair; president, Toyo Eiwa Women’s University), Koyasu Masuo (professor, Kyoto University), Konishi Yukuo (professor, Tokyo Women’s Medical University), Sakamoto Akira (professor, Ochanomizu Women’s University), Sakakihara Yoichi (professor, Ochanomizu Women’s University), Sugawara Masumi (assistant professor, Ochanomizu Women’s University), and Minoura Yasuko (professor emeritus, Ochanomizu Women’s University).

Figure 1. Composition of the Survey



both positive and negative, of visual media on children. The surveyed children were 2 years old for the FY 2004 (Jan. 2005) survey.

Pilot Group Survey series

This represents a preliminary survey, the results of which are reflected in the design of the Follow-up Group Survey. Initially four groups, of approximately 100 three-, six-, nine-, and twelve-year-old children, were formed to be surveyed over a period of three years. The third and final survey was conducted in 2005, when the children were five, eight, eleven, and fourteen.

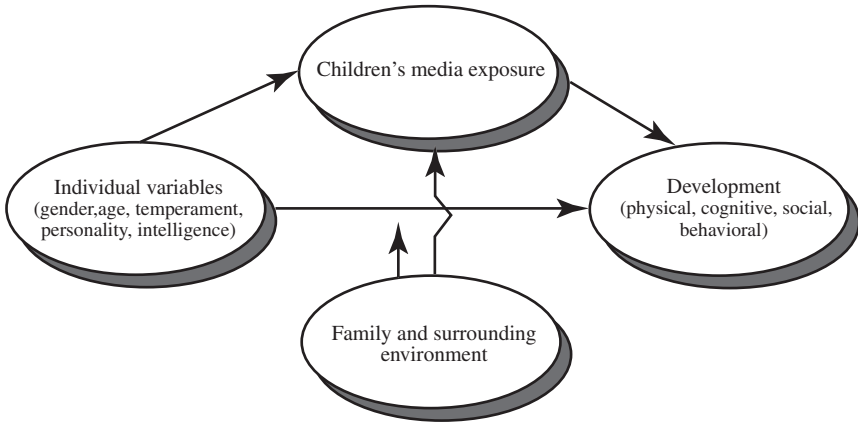
The surveys were based on three hypotheses:

1. The content and quantity of visual media exposure affects children’s development, behavior, and understanding of society.
2. The vector and strength of visual media exposure on children change, both positively and negatively, in accordance with the manner in which they come into contact with particular media.
3. The family and surrounding environment influences children’s development, behavior, and understanding of society, but in some cases that influence may be affected by visual media exposure. In other words, the direct influences of family and surrounding environment on children may possibly be strengthened or weakened by visual media exposure.

The Follow-up Group survey is intended to continuously study the conditions of media exposure among children, based on these three hypotheses, and analyze the impact of media exposure on their development and behavior. (Figure 2)

The survey sample consisted of approximately 1,200 children born in 2002

Figure 2. Hypothetical Framework of the Study



in the city of Kawasaki (population 1.3 million; located south of Tokyo). Started before their first birthdays and held after they turned 1 year old, and again after they turned two, the survey has been conducted three times to date. It follows the visual media to which the children were exposed in their daily lives and how those media relate to their growth and development, tracing the changes therein.

At the three junctures (under 1 year, 1 year, and 2 years), the study administered the “Television Viewing Survey” (using a “Viewing Diary” with a time chart with 15-minute increments) and the “Questionnaire on Family Life and Media Exposure.” A “Language Development Survey” was administered at age 1 and 2 years. This paper presents a report on conditions of television viewing for infants from under 1 year to 2 years of age based on an analysis of Viewing Diary records and results of the questionnaires on family life and media exposure.

Parents were asked to keep the Viewing Diary on a weekly basis, recording times, content, and mode of viewing. A similar record was requested for videos and electronic games. Parents were asked to fill in questionnaires on family life and media exposure asking about the reactions of the children to television and how the parents are involved in children’s television viewing.

The particulars of the survey are outlined below (Figure 3)

INFANT EXPOSURE TO TELEVISION

For the survey on television viewing by infants, parents were asked to respond under three categories: absorbed in watching, not doing anything else (con-

Figure 3. Outline of the Survey

	1st Survey	2nd Survey	3rd Survey
Target of the survey	Of 6,000 babies born in the city of Kawasaki, Kanagawa prefecture between February and July 2002, stratification was made by area of residence and 1,600 children were chosen by random selection. The families of 1,368 agreed to cooperate with the study and were registered as part of the “Better Broadcasting for Children” project.		
	Parents of children under 1 yr. (1,368)	Parents of children 1 yr. old (1,250)	Parents of children 2 ys. old (1,244)
Period of survey	Jan. 14-20, 2003	Jan. 13-19, 2004	Jan. 13-19, 2005
Valid responses			
Television Viewing Fact-Finding survey (diary format)	1,160 (Kanto, 1,160)	1,070 (Kanto, 1,051)	1,060 (Kanto, 1,028)
Questionnaire on Family Life and Media Exposure	1,224	1,147	1,105
Language development survey	—	1,062	1,098
Valid responses rate			
Television Viewing Fact-Finding survey (diary format) (%)	84.8	85.6	85.2
Questionnaire on Family Life and Media Exposure (%)	89.5	91.8	88.8
Language development survey (%)	—	85.0	88.3
Valid response rate since first survey			
Television Viewing Fact-Finding survey (diary format) (%)		78.2	77.5
Questionnaire on Family Life and Media Exposure (%)		83.8	80.8
Language development survey (%)		77.6	80.3

centrated viewing); viewing while doing something else; and television as background. The parents were asked to measure the time in 15-minute units, and indicate channel viewed, as well as note the content watched (name of program, etc.).

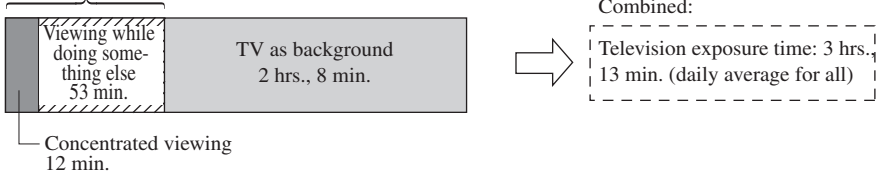
Changes in TV Viewing Hours and Exposure Time

In the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute “Children’s Time Use Survey” conducted in 2003 discriminated only two categories: concentrated viewing and viewing while doing. For this survey, in order to gauge the amount of time parents thought “the child appears to be hearing the sound of the television,” we introduced the concept of “television as background,” framing “TV exposure” under three modes. Evaluating time when the televi-

Figure 4. Changes in Television Exposure Time

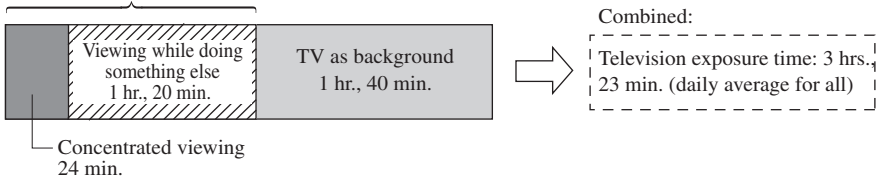
◆ under 1 year (n = 1,160)

Television viewing time 1 hr., 5 min. (weekly average)



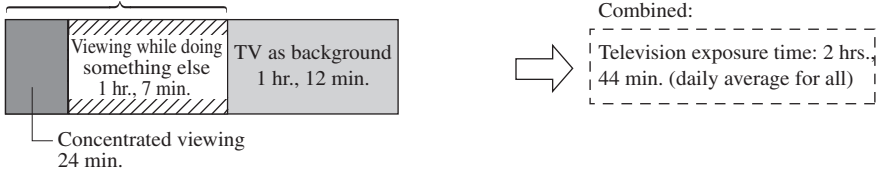
◆ 1 year old (n = 1,070)

Television viewing time 1 hr., 44 min. (weekly average)



◆ 2 years old (n = 1,060)

Television viewing time 1 hr., 31 min. (weekly average)

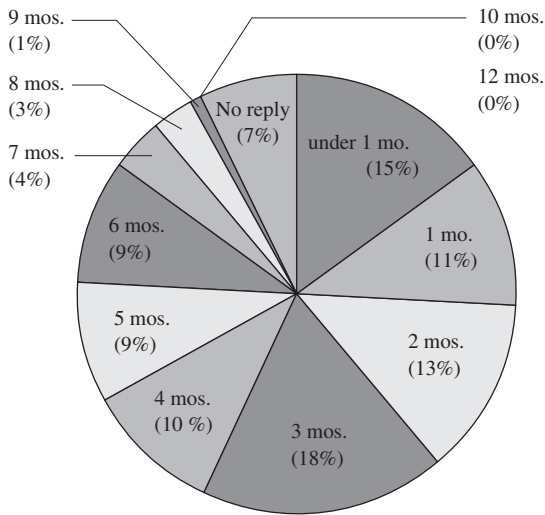


sion is simply left on allows us both to follow fluctuations in this type of time over the long term and to get a clearer grasp of actual “television viewing”—“concentrated viewing” and “viewing while doing something else”—separate from television as background.

According to the weekly Television Viewing Diaries kept by the respondents, the proportion of infants exposed even a little to television was 97 percent for under 1 year, 99 percent for 1 year-olds, and 97 percent for 2 year-olds. Since the rate was nearly 100 percent for all groups at the point surveyed, this report analyzes television exposure/viewing time not as average time of the person exposed/viewing but average time divided by the total number of respondents (average time including persons not exposed to television during the period the survey was held).

Television exposure time (see Figure 4) was little different for under 1-year-olds (3 hrs., 13 min.) and 1-year-olds (3 hrs., 23 min.), but went down

Figure 5. Time Children Begin Being Exposed to Television (questionnaire)



sharply for 2-year olds to 2 hours, 44 minutes. The main reason for this reduction is the decrease in “TV as background” time between the 1-year-old and 2-year-old age groups. “TV as background” time had in fact similarly decreased between the under-1-year-old and 1-year-old surveys (from 2 hrs, 8 min. to 1 hr., 40 min.). In other words, “TV as background” time decreased slightly each year for the three ages. Presumably, as the children grow older, since the children become more physically active and their sphere of activity widens, there is a decrease in the amount of time they remain in the room where the television is turned on.

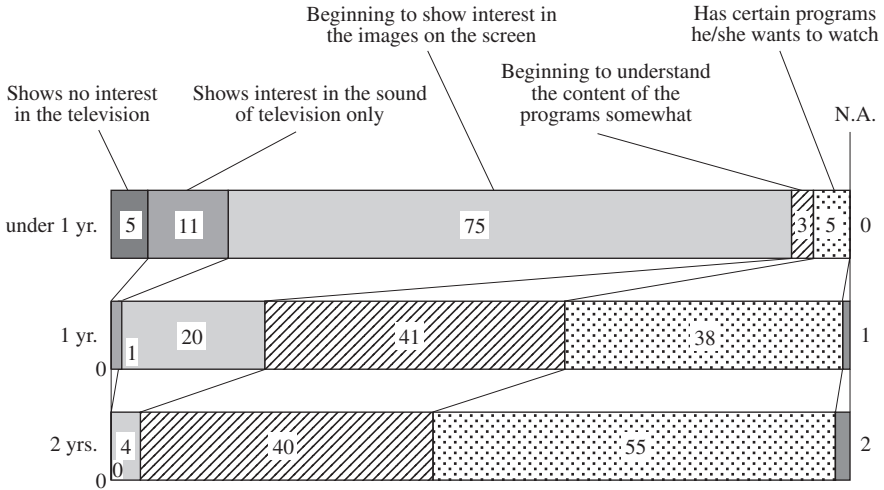
Moreover, the amount of time the children are watching concentratedly or viewing while doing something else—while increasing between under-1-year and 1-year-old, from 1 hr., 5 min. to 1 hr., 44 min.—decreased slightly to 1 hr., 31 min. at age 2.

First Exposure to TV and Child’s Response

The results of the “Questionnaire on Family Life and Media Exposure” asking mothers at how many months they began to show their infants television are shown in Figure 5. The figure is over half (57 percent) for infants 3 months old and under, and more than 90 percent for those 8 months old and under. Almost all infants under 1 year old are exposed to television before they turn 1 year old.

What then, is the reaction of infants under 1 year, 1 year, and 2 years old to

Figure 6. Changes in Children’s Responses to Television (questionnaire)

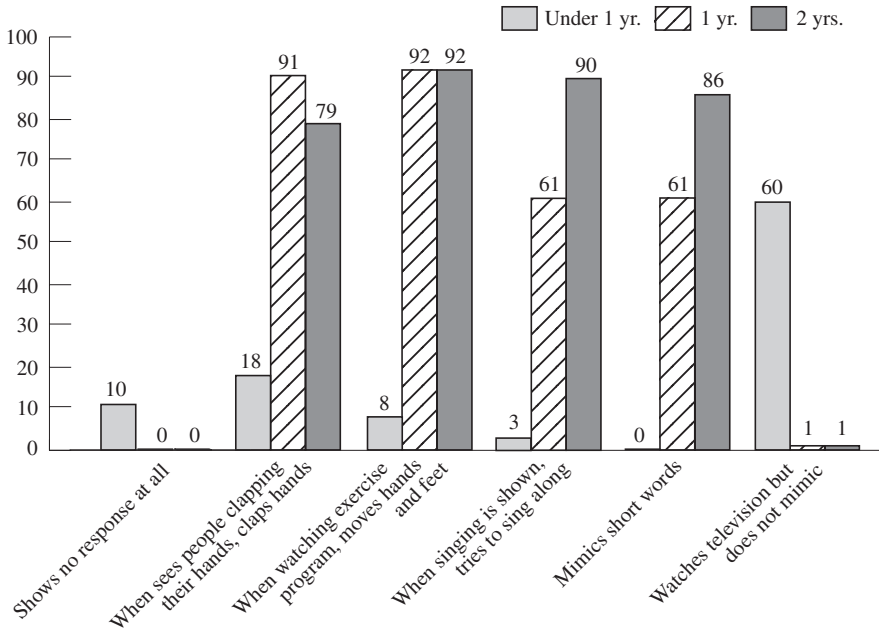


television? When asked to describe the stage closest to that observed in the child (Figure 6), 75 percent of mothers answered, at the under-1-year old juncture, “beginning to show interest in the images,” which is about three quarters of the total. By 1 year, 41 percent of mothers responded “beginning to understand the content somewhat,” and 38 percent responded that the child “has certain programs he/she wants to watch.” These two responses combined can be interpreted as indicating nearly 80 percent of 1-year-olds are watching television with a certain level of understanding of the content. By 2 years, more than half of mothers responded that the child “has certain programs he/she wants to watch” (55 percent).

Figure 7, meanwhile, presents the results of the mothers’ responses concerning the reactions of their infants while watching television (multiple answers permitted). At under 1-year old, 60 percent of mothers respond “watches television but does not mimic,” but by the time they are 1 year old, 90 percent of babies “mimic clapping of hands” and “mimic of exercise.” Sixty percent of mothers responded “mimics singing” and “mimics short words” for 1-year-olds and 90 percent responded likewise for 2-year-olds.²

² Concerning the cognitive development of children, Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget defined the developmental stage from birth to 1.5 to 2 years as the “sensory motor” stage in which they adapt to the environment with their senses and movements. From age 2, they can exercise their imaginations and begin to rapidly master use of language (Uchida Nobuko, *Yoji shinrigaku e no shotai: Kodomo no sekai-zukuri* [Introduction to Children’s Psychology: How Children Create Their Worlds], Science Sha, 1989). It is supposedly along this process of development that mimicking of clapping hands, moving the arms and legs, singing, and words proceed.

Figure 7. Infant Reactions While Watching Television (questionnaire)



The “Television and Children’s Lives” survey of 1979,³ incidentally, asked the same question of parents, but at that time, the proportion of parents who thought their children are “beginning to understand the content somewhat” and “have certain programs he/she wants to watch” stood at 60 percent. Moreover, less than 80 percent of mothers of two-and-a-half-year-olds answered that their children “mimic the singing” while watching television.

Judging from these findings, the “process of infants’ responses to television,” as manifested in their understanding of program content and mimicking of songs and words, has proceeded at an accelerating pace over the course of the past 26 years.

Content of Television Viewing

The number of minutes (by channel) of daily television viewing for 1- and 2-year-olds is presented in Figure 8. For children of both ages, the most commonly watched channel is the NHK Educational channel. When we compare

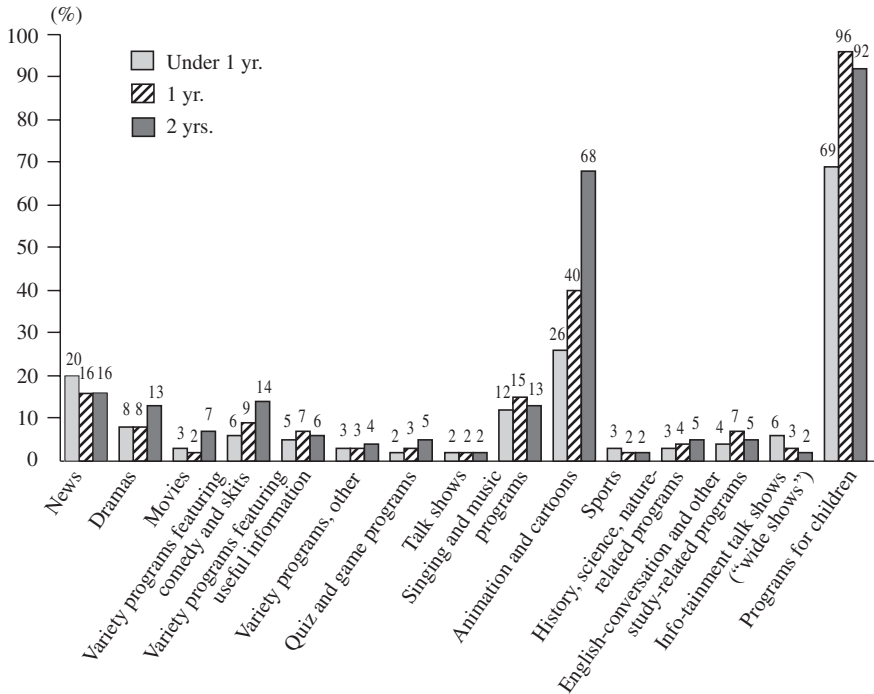
³ NHK Public Opinion Research Institute, ed., *Yoji seikatsu to terebi: 0-sai kara 6-sai made* [The Lives of Young Children and Television: From Under 1-year old to 6 Years]. NHK Hoso Shuppan Kyokai, 1981.

Figure 8. Time Spent Watching Television (by channel) (weekly average/unit: min.)

	at 1 yr.	at 2 yrs.
NHK (General)	4	3
NHK Educational	62	44
Nippon Television	7	7
TBS	8	7
Fuji Television	11	13
Television Asahi	5	6
Television Tokyo	4	7
Other channels	3	4
Total	103	93

(based on Television Viewing Diaries)

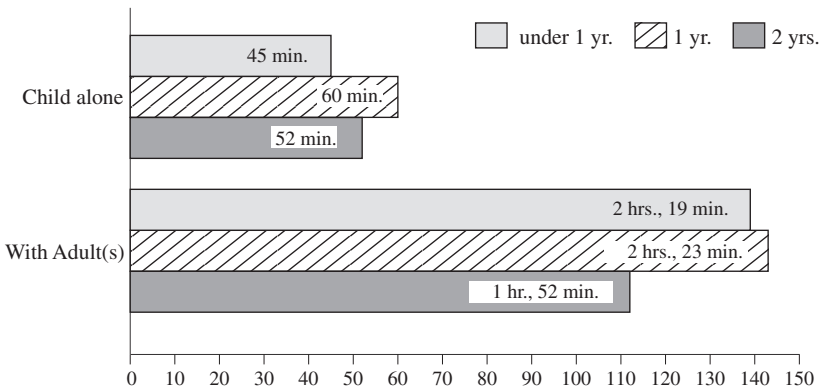
Figure 9. Television Program Genre Normally Watched (questionnaire)



the two ages, however, we can see that for 2-year-olds, there is less of a tendency for viewing to concentrate on NHK Educational.

Figure 9 shows genres of programs mothers listed their infants as watching,

Figure 10. “Child (Children) Alone” vs. “With Adult(s)” in Television Viewing Time (daily average)



(based on Television Viewing Diaries)

being asked to list as many as applicable. For infants at all three stages, the most frequently watched programs were those targeted for infants, and as they get older they watch more animation and cartoon-type programs. Television watching by infants is concentrated in these two genres with only minimal watching of the other genres.

ROLE OF PARENTS

The survey also asked parents to record in the Television Viewing Diary whether the child 1) was watching the television alone or with other children; 2) watching with parents; 3) watching with adult(s) other than parents. In the analysis, responses 2) and 3) were combined under the rubric “with adults.” The results of the survey on average television viewing time per day at the under 1-year, 1-year-old, and 2-year-old stages, regarding viewing of “the child (children) alone” vis-à-vis “with adults” are shown in Figure 10. With regards to “with adults” the figures for under 1 year old and 1 year old do not differ appreciably, but between 1 year old and 2 years old the time decreased from 2 hrs., 23 min. to 1 hr., 52 min.

Conversation While Viewing; Rules on Television Watching

We asked mothers “Do you talk to the child about the content of the program while watching together?” The responses showed that, as the child grows older, the proportion of mothers who talk to their children about the content of

Figure 11. Do you Speak to the Child about the Content of the Program Watched Together? (questionnaire)

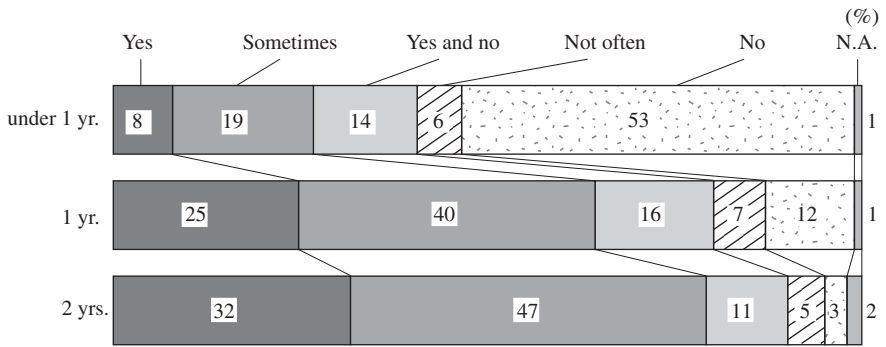
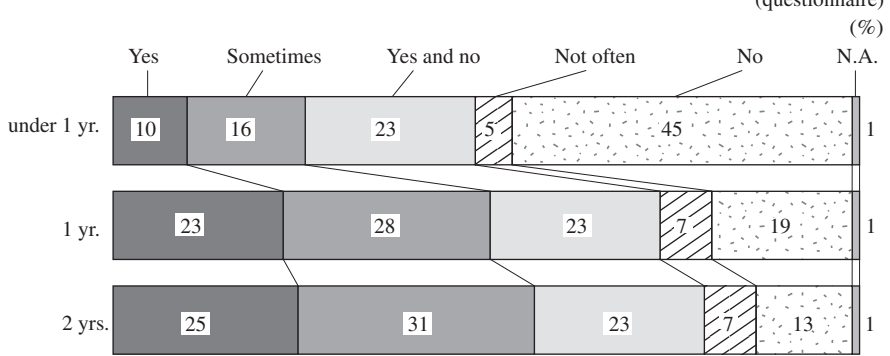


Figure 12. Do You Decide Which Programs the Child May Watch? (questionnaire)

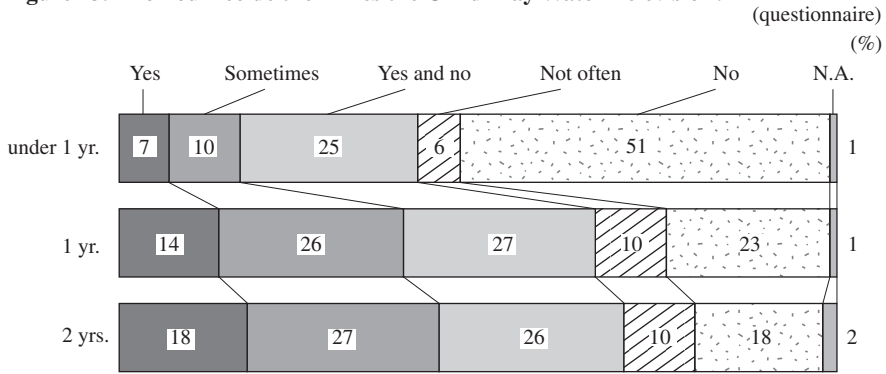


the programs increases. This behavior is observed among 79 percent of mothers at the 2-year-old stage. (See Figure 11).

We asked mothers “Do you decide which programs the child may watch?” The responses showed that 26 percent of mothers at the under-1-yr. stage (combining “yes” and “sometimes” responses), 51 percent at the 1-yr. stage, and 56 percent at the 2-yr. stage made this decision, the percent increasing as the child grows older. (Figure 12) Regarding “Do you decide the times the child may watch television?” the responses showed that 17 percent of mothers at the under-1-yr. stage (combining “yes” and “sometimes” responses), 40 percent at the 1-yr. stage, and 45 percent at the 2-yr. stage made this decision, likewise increasing as the child grow older. (Figure 13)

From these results, we can observe that as the child grows older, the time spent watching television with parents tends to decrease, but that mothers’ interest in/involvement with “what kind of television my child/our children

Figure 13. Do You Decide the Times the Child May Watch Television?



watch” rises, as shown by the increase in rates when mothers talk about the content of programs with the children and make decisions about the content and times of television viewing permitted.

Evaluation of Influence of Television on Children

Now let us look at how mothers see the influence of television on their children. When asked, “Do you think television has more good influences on the child or more bad influences?” at the 2-year-old stage, 34 percent of mothers replied “more good influences” (including responses for “probably more good influences”) while 45 percent replied “hard to say either way,” and 20 percent responded either “more bad influences” (including responses for “probably more bad influences”). The responses thus diverge widely, and this tendency can be observed in the under-1-year and 1-year categories as well (Figure 14).

In response to questions about the specific influences of television on children, permitting multiple responses, at the 2-year stage, the largest number of mothers (73 percent) responded “increases child’s knowledge,” and this tendency was consistent with that observed at under 1 year and 1 year. (Figure 15) “Makes behavior and language rough” (44 percent) is followed by “increases closeness with friends” (38 percent), and “enriches language expressiveness (38 percent), and while, at the 1-yr-old stage 32 percent of responses indicated evaluations of bad influence on language use, by 2 years old, the “makes behavior and language rough” figure has risen to 44 percent.

We may conclude that, as children grow to 1 year to 2 years, they begin to understand the content of programs, and, as the habit of regular television watching begins and their attachment to television use intensifies, mothers begin to be more concerned about the influences, especially neg-

Figure 14. Influence of Television on Children

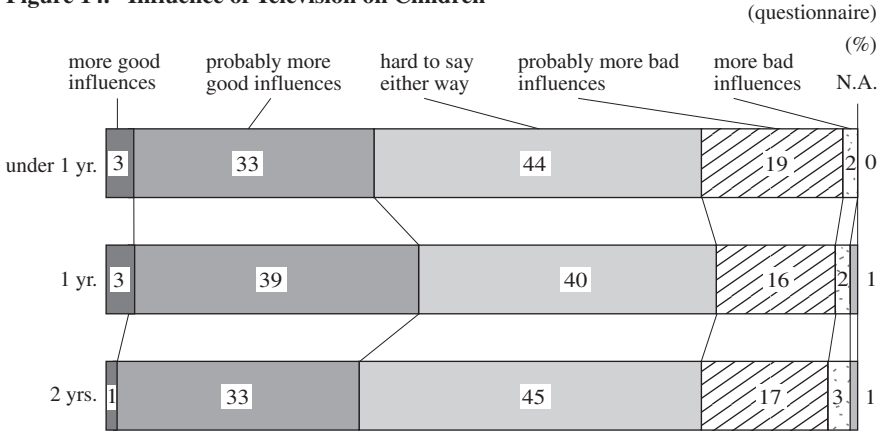
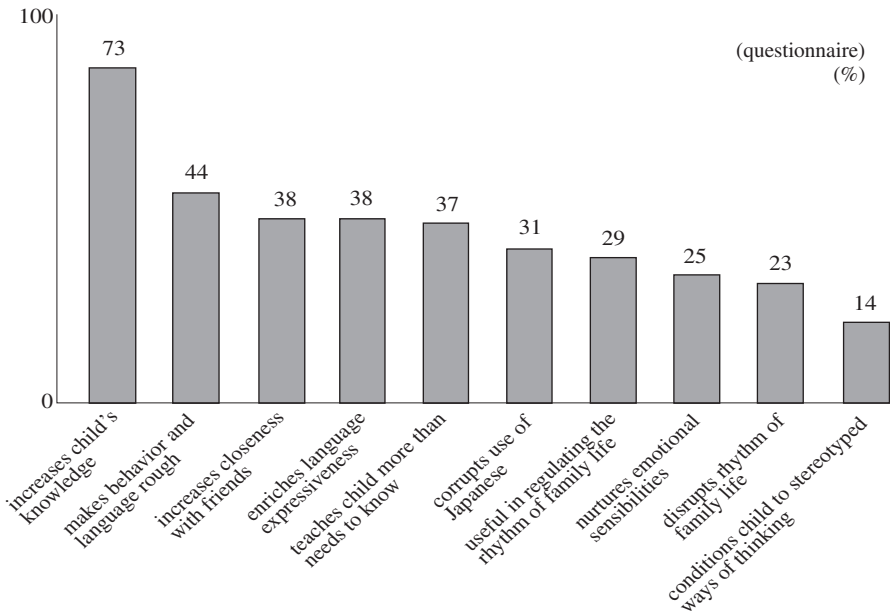


Figure 15. Influences of Television on Child (multiple responses; 2-yr.-old stage)



ative influences, of television on the child. This concern is reflected in the control of the times and programs the child may watch, as seen in the previous section, thus influencing the responses and thinking of the mother.

TELEVISION WATCHING AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

As noted in the introduction above, one of the hypotheses established in conducting this survey is that the family and surrounding environment influences children's development, behavior, and understanding of society, that in some cases that influence may be affected by visual media exposure, and that the direct influences may possibly be strengthened or weakened by visual media exposure. Based on the results of the survey presented in the foregoing sections, let us now look at the relationship of television viewing on family and surrounding environment for 2 year olds, who are beginning to watch television with understanding of the content.

Presence/Absence of Siblings and Content of Television Viewing

The results of a survey of 2 year olds living in the Kanto region (including Tokyo), based on figures combining "concentrated" and "viewing while doing something else," and showing the top 20 programs listed are presented in Figure 16. As observed in the section on "Content of Television Viewing" above, the majority of programs watched by 2 year olds as a whole are children's programs broadcast on the NHK Educational channel, but also include a number of programs in the animation/cartoon genre broadcast on commercial channels.

Now, let us compare the top 10 programs as affected by the presence/absence of siblings, for single children ($n = 379$), in cases with one or more older siblings ($n = 485$), and in cases with one or more younger siblings ($n = 175$). (Figure 17) In the case of single children eight of the top 10 programs and in the case of children with younger siblings, nine of the top 10 programs are on NHK Educational television, but when the child has older siblings, the top five programs are all animation/cartoon programs shown on commercial television.

As these results show, when the child has no siblings or has younger siblings, there is a stronger tendency to viewing of NHK Educational programs for preschool children in the company of the parent. When there are older siblings, there is a stronger tendency for the children to watch the television on their own, viewing animation/cartoon programs.

Mother's Viewing Time and Child's Viewing Time

Now let us look at the relationship between television viewing time of the mothers themselves and child's viewing time. Figure 18 shows the proportion of television viewing time for 2-year-old children vis-à-vis the ordinary television viewing time per day of their mothers. For 2 year olds of mothers who

Figure 16. Top 20 Programs Watched by 2 Year Olds

(based on Television Viewing Diaries)

	Channel	Program	Rate (%)
1.	Fuji	Sazae-san*	28
2.	NHK Ed.	Okasan to issho	25
3.	Fuji	Chibi Maruko-chan*	24
4.	TV Asahi	Doraemon*	23
5.	NHK Ed.	Puchi-puchi Anime	23
6.	NHK Ed.	Nihongo de asobo	22
7.	NHK Ed.	Inai-inai ba!	22
8.	NHK Ed.	Tsukutte wakuwaku	19
9.	NHK Ed.	Charenji taimu	18
10.	NHK Ed.	Buruna no ehon*	18
11.	NHK Ed.	Pitagorasuitchi	18
12.	NHK Ed.	Quintetto	18
13.	TV Asahi	Kureyon Shin-chan*	17
14.	TV Asahi	Minisute	17
15.	NHK Ed.	Zawazawa mori no ganko-chan	16
16.	NHK Ed.	Piritto Q	16
17.	NHK Ed.	Sore yuke kodomo-tai	15
18.	NHK Ed.	Do-re-mi no terebi	14
19.	NHK Ed.	Bakeruno shogakko, Hyudoro-gumi	14
20.	TV Asahi	Futari wa purikyua*	14

(Order reflects figures to the first decimal place. *Animation/cartoon)

watch “4 or more hrs.” per day, the majority (56 percent) watch “3 or more hours” of television. At the other extreme, three fourths (73 percent) of 2 year olds of mothers who watch “1 hour or less” watch “one hour or less.” As these figures show, the length of time the mother watches television is related to infant viewing time. Among mothers who tend to watch longer hours of television, the responses to the question, “Do you often watch television with your child?” revealed a much longer time watching television with their child than mothers who watch less television.

In the “Children’s Time Use Survey” conducted in 2003 as well, the viewing time of both the mother and child was surveyed⁴ and analyzed as follows:

⁴ Nakano Sachiko “The Diversifying Use of Media by Children: A Report on the 2003 Children’s Time Use Survey,” *NHK Broadcasting Studies*, 3 (2003).

Figure 17. Top Ten Programs

(based on Television Viewing Diaries)

Top Ten Programs of Single Child Viewer

	Channel	Program	Rate (%)
1.	NHK Ed.	Okasan to issho	23
2.	NHK Ed.	Puchi-puchi Anime	19
3.	NHK Ed.	Tsukutte wakuwaku	19
4.	Fuji TV	Sazae-san*	18
5.	NHK Ed.	Charenji taimu	18
6.	NHK Ed.	Buruna no ehon*	18
7.	NHK Ed.	Inai-inai ba!	18
8.	NHK Ed.	Nihongo de asobo	17
9.	Fuji TV	Chibi Maruko-chan*	17
10.	NHK Ed.	Piritto Q	17

(Order reflects figures to the first decimal place. *Animation/cartoon)

Top Ten Programs of Child with Older Siblings

	Channel	Program	Rate (%)
1.	Fuji TV	Sazae-san*	36
2.	TV Asahi	Doraemon*	34
3.	Fuji TV	Chibi Maruko-chan*	29
4.	TV Asahi	Kureyon Shin-chan*	26
5.	TV Asahi	Minisute	26
6.	NHK Ed.	Nihongo de asobo	24
7.	NHK Ed.	Okasan to issho	24
8.	NHK Ed.	Puchi-puchi Anime	24
9.	TV Tokyo	Pocket Monsters - AG*	24
10.	NHK Ed.	Inai-inai ba!	23

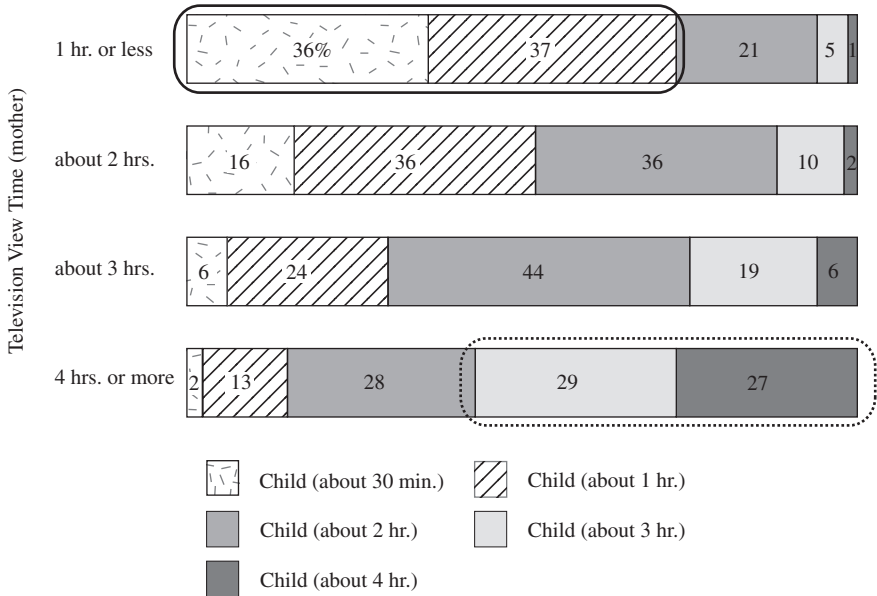
(Order reflects figures to the first decimal place. *Animation/cartoon)

Top Ten Programs of Child with Younger Siblings

	Channel	Program	Rate (%)
1.	NHK Ed.	Okasan to issho	31
2.	NHK Ed.	Nihongo de asobo	28
3.	NHK Ed.	Puchi-puchi Anime	28
4.	NHK Ed.	Inai-inai ba!	27
5.	Fuji TV	Sazae-san*	25
6.	NHK Ed.	Pitagorasuitchi	23
7.	NHK Ed.	Tsukutte wakuwaku	23
8.	NHK Ed.	Nyan-chu to issho	22
9.	NHK Ed.	Kuintetto	22
10.	NHK Ed.	Bakeruno shogakko, Hyudoro-gumi	22

(Order reflects figures to the first decimal place. *Animation/cartoon)

Figure 18. Relation of Mothers and 2-year-old Children’s Television Viewing Time (questionnaire)



Examined by hours of television watched by the mother, it was observed that the longer the mother watches television, the longer the child’s viewing time. . . . In the breakdown of children’s viewing time, there is a much greater difference in terms of the time child spends watching with mother than in child’s solitary viewing. In other words, when the mother watches more television, the time the child is watching grows longer.

The results of both these surveys, then, indicate clearly that the mother’s television-watching behavior has a major influence on the television-watching behavior of the child.

VIDEOS AND ELECTRONIC GAMES

The survey also asked parents to record hours of use for videos and video games on the Television Viewing Diary.

Video Use vs. Television Viewing Time

Video use was 59 percent for under 1-year olds, 78 percent for 1-year olds, and 85 percent for 2-year olds. Average video use time per day was 34 min-

Figure 19. Video Use Rate and Time (daily average)

	(%)		
	under 1 yr.	1 yr.	2 yrs.
Rate of use (%)	59	78	85
Average hours of use (minutes)	34	47	50
Average for all (minutes)	20	37	43

(based on Television Viewing Diaries)

utes for under 1-year olds, 47 minutes for 1-year olds, and 50 minutes for 2-year olds. The averages for all under-1-year olds, 1-year olds, and 2-year olds were 20 minutes, 37 minutes, and 43 minutes, respectively. (Figure 19).

The results of the National Time-Use Survey (2005)⁵ show that video use is 8 percent for the entire population of 10 years or over and the average per-day use is 8 minutes. By comparison, therefore, the video viewing time of young children is notably long.

Changes in Video Viewing

The “yes” and “sometimes” responses to the comment, “My child likes watching videos” combined at 30 percent for mothers of under 1-year olds, 76 percent for 1-year olds, and 90 percent for 2 year olds, rising as the child grows older. (Figure 20). Ninety percent of mothers of 2 year olds said their children “Demand to see certain videos” and about 78 percent observed that their 2 year olds had “memorized almost all the content of the video[s].”

Number of Favorite Videos/DVDs

Ninety-eight percent of the homes of mothers of the 2 year olds surveyed have video or DVD players. Asked “How many favorite videos or DVDs does your child have?” 42 percent of these answered 10 or more. Only 4 percent answered that they had “none.” (Figure 21)

Regarding manipulation of the video equipment itself, 30 percent of mothers of 2-year olds said “Can manipulate him/herself.” By the time children reach 2 years of age, we can imagine them turning on their favorite videos and watching by themselves. Videos rapidly became a part of the lives of infants and seem to have become a virtually indispensable part of daily life.

⁵ Yoshida Rie, Nakano Sachiko, and Watanabe Yoko, “Gendaijin no seikatsu jikan: 2005-nen Kokumin seikatsu jikan chosa kekka yori” [Time Use of People Today: From the Results of the 2005 National Time Use Survey], *Hoso kenkyu to chosa*, April 2006.

Figure 20. “Does Your Child Like Watching Videos?”

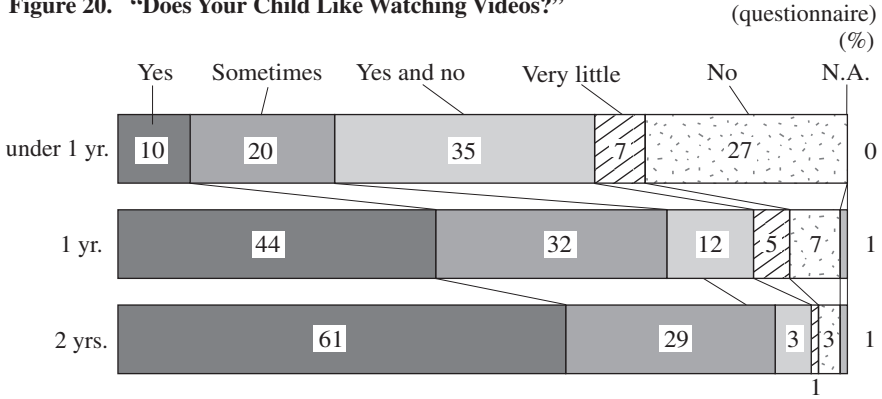
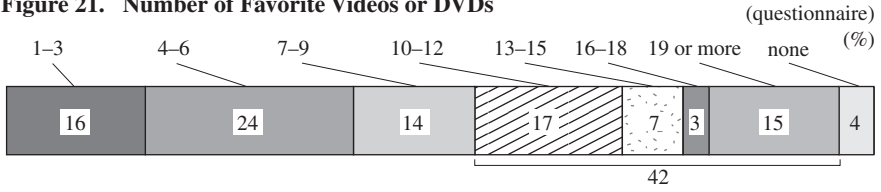


Figure 21. Number of Favorite Videos or DVDs



Electronic Games

At the 2-year-old stage, 87 percent of infants still have no experience of using electronic games. In the 2003 Children’s Time Use Survey, however, it was found that one in four 6-year olds played electronic games an average of about 1 hour a day.⁶ Use of electronic games has come to occupy an important place in the lives of children today; the successive surveys in this study will be valuable for the information they provide about the age at which young children begin to use them.

TELEVISION AND THE LIVES OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The main findings from the Television Viewing Diaries and the “Questionnaire Survey on Family Life and Media Use” are as follows:

1. As children grow older, the amount of time the television is on and can be heard by them as a form of background, decreases.
2. By 1 year, 80 percent of mothers feel that their children “are starting to understand the content of the programs,” and by 2 years, more than half

⁶ See Nakano 2004, p. 95.

of mothers respond that their children “have certain programs that they want to watch.” From this we can surmise that from around the 2-year stage, most young children are watching television with a certain level of understanding.

3. At the 2-year stage, the proportion of time watching television with an adult decreases, while the concern of the mother in the child’s television viewing increases. Mothers increasingly talk about the content of the programs with the children and limit the programs and time their children may watch.
4. From around age 2, the programs young children watch broaden, from the mainly NHK Educational channel programs for infants that previously dominated their viewing, to include animation and cartoon programs broadcast on commercial channels. That trend is seen even more strongly in cases when the child has older siblings.
5. Children of mothers who watch longer hours of television tend to watch longer hours of television as well, while children of mothers who watch less, likewise watch less. Thus the viewing behavior of mothers has a clear influence on the viewing behavior of young children.

This survey, aimed at better understanding children in the multimedia era, obtained data showing that television exposure is widespread among infants at a very early stage after they are born. We also glimpsed how videos have become an inextricable part of the daily life of 1-year or 2-year-old children. As infants grow, their use of numerous electronic media expands in the course of their association with their parents, siblings, and friends from electronic games, to personal computers, the Internet, and mobile phones. This series of surveys is sure to reveal much more valuable information about how children use and are influenced by these media.

The “Better Broadcasting for Children” Project will continue this series of surveys, based on the changes revealed in the current survey on media use by under-1-year-olds, 1-year-olds, and 2-year-olds, and work to reveal, through research approached from many different fields, the impact of visual media use on children.

(Translated by Lynne E. Riggs)

Composition of the Sample

	2-yrs (all)	male	female	2 yrs., 1-6 mos.	2 yrs., 6-7 mos.	2 yrs., 8-9 mos.	2 yrs., 10-11 mos.
No.	1,105	582	523	106	350	341	308
Percent	100	52.7	47.3	9.6	31.7	30.9	27.9

	Attendance at day care of preschool (kindergarten)			No. of siblings			
	Attend	Don't attend	No response	Single child	Elder sibling	Younger sibling	No response
No.	247	840	18	409	530	190	6
Percent	22.4	76	1.6	37	48	17.2	0.5