

Your Village: Parenting Beyond Discipline

#200: What Constitutes Media Violence & Helping Preschooler with Change When They Don't Like It! Transcript

Erin: Welcome to the Your Village podcast, Parenting Beyond Discipline. Your Village is the most comprehensive site for evidence-based parenting classes available on-demand at YourVillageOnline.com. Our classes give parents the foundation, steps and tools for creating strong, healthy relationships with their children, resulting in responsible, cooperative, happy and successful children and families! My goal is to help parents support their children in finding and reaching their own unique potential. The podcast is a place to learn about all things parenting and get your questions answered! I'm Your Village founder and your host, Erin Royer.

Hi everyone! I hope everyone is doing at least ok. I know I've been up and down a bit lately. Trying to stay as positive as possible. But it's not easy right now. Among other things, the full distance learning is wearing on us all around here, especially my younger two. It's just hard and every day at least one of them tells me they want to go back to school. But our county LA county is still on the watch list so we have to drop down another 270 cases a day average and stay there for two weeks before they can go back to school 2 days a week for hybrid learning program. To a lot of you that may sound like a lot, and it is, it's almost 27% drop, but we do have over 10 million people in the county. But other nearby counties have been able to start hybrid learning so I'm hopeful we can get there too. But we're not doing so well. We've been hanging at this level for a while now.

I want to thank all of you for your support, all of you loyal listeners and especially those who have shared with your friends and helped this podcast grow, those who follow me on Instagram and YouTube and my biggest thank you to the members of the site. I feel grateful to be able to share my knowledge and to know every day that it's helping families. I spent years building the site before I even launched and had no idea at the time if would be something that resonated with parents or not. I was raising toddlers and writing and recording classes. Now I know all of the work and the risk was worth it.

AS I shared last week, I have started producing more video tips that are going up on the Your Village YouTube Channel and my Instagram page. So to find those, just search Your Village and you will find the channel and then subscribe to see the video tips as soon as they are posted. Because I've been posting more videos and more of you are subscribing to the channel I've moved up to first or second in the list when you do a search so yay!! If Instagram is more your thing, you can find me at [IronMom2020](https://www.instagram.com/IronMom2020). I

would LOVE to know what tips you would like to hear about! I'm starting with 2 video posts a week and plan to work my way up to 5 a week once I get into a good flow! So this is an opportunity to get your tips up and going and answered quickly! For now we'll have you send them to Amy at Amy@YourVillageOnline.com. Just let her know it's idea for the video tips. I got two videos up this week on Halloween tips during the pandemic and how to get your kids to do their chores without complaining!

The questions this week are about what constitutes media violence and how to help a toddler deal with change, particularly one who is not real keen about it to begin with!

First question:

"Hello Erin, I am currently listening to one of your podcasts on screentime and media, and there is one issue I'm currently stuck on. What is the definition of "violence" in screen time? A rival podcast lists how any form of conflict on the screen - be it raised voices, angry faces, even a foot squashing a flower - is listed as "violence", and that the reason why violence on the screen is detrimental is due to the speed in which it is happening. It was alarming to hear that anything that creates conflict on the screen can cause an issue in a young child. What is the definition of violence on the screen, and how should we address it re when our children either role play or ask questions to process what they see?

I'm so glad you sent this question! I'm going to address two different point on this question. First, what I would deem as violence and second about the speed of images on screen.

In the class on peaceful parenting I talk about how we all experience some levels of negative emotions on a regular basis, for most of us, many times throughout the day daily is not uncommon to feel emotions from minor annoyance to frustration, fear, to anger. So it is important for kids to see these emotions and see others dealing with these emotions. What I recommend to parents is to show and share these emotions but within 3 criteria: keep your display of anger short, at moderate levels and have a resolution.

Short means returning to calm within a few minutes. moderate- means, showing some emotion, it;s ok to have some frustration, even a tone of angry and some elevation in your voice. But screaming and yelling, shaming or name calling, any feeling of being out of control and your children will not feel safe. You want them to feel safe with you.I talk more in the peaceful parenting classes about how this feeling safe with you builds

and maintains the connection we need for them to respect us rather than fear us, and why that is so important, especially as they get older.

Resolution means reconnect after you share your anger, hurt or frustration. Apologize and explain. Explain that you were angry but that you are calm and that you still love your child, even when you are upset.

Studies also show that parents who apologize or explain after a display of anger have children with higher emotional intelligence.

So given this, a raised voice is not violence, depending on what is said, 'im so frustrated the glass got broken!' "I'm so mad that I paid in full for the landscaping and they still haven't finished!" But "What are you, some kind of an idiot?!" That is hurtful. Verbal abuse is as harmful if not more than physical. So if the characters in a media program are calling each other names, then I would say this does constitute as a violent or harmful act. So for children under 8 or 9, I would steer clear from this type of interaction between characters. Once they are a bit older, understand the difference between reality and fantasy which is around 8 to 9 and they can fully understand and participate in appropriate ways of sharing frustrations. So when they do see something physically or emotionally less than appropriate, it's an opportunity to have a discussion around how it could be handled better. In the class on kids and media newborn to 10, I talk about watching with our kids so we know what they are seeing and can discuss it. Because let's face it, there is a spectrum to everything. It's rarely black or white. Interactions are nuanced and complicated. So being able to have those conversations, hear how our children interpret and understand something can be very enlightening and having discussions around how the characters could have handled things differently.

Most of us start out our younger children on things really benign like sesame street, blues clues and my kids loved this show called Kayo the little blue bus when they were in preschool. It was a really sweet show with a lot about social-emotional skills and taking responsibility. So sticking with these types of shows for younger kids will greatly minimize their exposure to any kind of violence. In the class on kids and media for 0-10 I talk about ways kids can inadvertently be exposed to inappropriate content in media if you are interested in learning how to use media for the positive and minimize the negative, that is a really good class chalk full of information. My thesis in grad school was about the effects of media on kids ages 0-5 and I share a lot of my research in that class and of course the ways to circumvent the negative effects. I also have a class for kids and media 11+ on how to protect older kids from all the online exposures that can come their way, and how to teach them about and help them to protect their digital

reputation as they age and go out into the world. These are on the website at YourVillageOnline.com.

Next I'll talk about some of the research about media and violence and the outcomes, along with information about the speed at which children experience media and their effects after a few words from our episode sponsor!

Now that we're back after the break I'm going to share more about the effects of media violence.

Before I get into the effects of and prevalence of media violence, I want to talk about "speed" in media that xx referred to, so first the research that I have about speed refers to attention difficulties (not related to ADHD) has found a positive correlation between attention difficulties in children who viewed regular commercial violent and non-violent entertainment content. (Two groups, violent or non-violent content had no bearing. Both groups had same outcome) The correlation did not hold true for viewing educational materials (Dora, Sesame Street) They did not however find a positive correlation between any viewing and later ADHD diagnoses. (Zimmerman & Christakis 2007)

Now about violence and media, using aggression to try to solve issues is showing a lack of social skills. So I will share how and what kinds of media have shown to increase acts of aggression.

First, much of the violence on television and in movies is presented in a sanitized and glamorized fashion, and in children's programming it often is presented as humorous.

28% of children's programming, has 4 or more aggressive acts per hour. (Strasburger, et. al., 2010) A recent analysis of video games revealed that more than half of all games contain violence, including >90% rated as appropriate for children aged 10 years and older. (Strasburger, et. al., 2010) While another study concluded that video games rated as suitable for everyone contained significant amounts of violence. 64% contained intentional violence, 60% rewarded players for injuring a character.

Researchers believe that repeated exposure to media violence can lead to anxiety and fear acceptance of violence as an appropriate means of solving conflict and desensitization with resulting increases in aggression and decreases in altruism. (Strasburger, et. al., 2010)

Over 1000 studies have shown that heavy exposure to violence in media increases aggressive behavior, especially in boys. (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2003)

Lastly, The relationship between media violence and real-life aggression is nearly as strong as the impact of cigarette smoking on lung cancer. Not everyone who smokes will get lung cancer, and not everyone who views media violence will become aggressive themselves. However, the connection is significant. The most problematic forms of media violence include attractive and unpunished perpetrators, no harm to victims, realism, and humor. (Bushman, Huesmann, 2001)

So with this kind of findings it is important that we keep an eye on what our children are seeing, playing and watching and limiting the exposure as well as watching together and having conversations about what we are seeing both positive and negative in social interactions in their media consumption.

Again, if you want to know more about how to do this, recommended guidelines, steps and ways to mitigate these effects, as well as how to handle battles over media, the class Kids and Media 0 to 10, or Kids and Media 11+ for guidance on managing media and the exposure for tweens and teens, those are both on the website at YourVillageOnline.com.

The next question is about how to help a child with a bigger life change who isn't particularly keep on change. Maud wrote,

"Hi Erin! Thanks for your podcasts that have been wonderfully helpful with my two boys (3 -going 4-and 1 year old). Our family lives in Switzerland, and we have to move out of our current apartment because it's just too small for the four of us, especially since we're considering having a third child sometime in the future. We just bought a new apartment which we'll be moving into in a little over two months. It's very hard for me to leave my building because we're friends with all our neighbors and our kids play together in the common building yard as well as in the dead-end street in front of it.

Thankfully we'll be moving within 4 minutes walking distance, but still, it will be hard for me because I know I've « nested » very strongly where I currently live - and also, on a general note, I'm pretty resistant to change. My first born (3 year and 10 months) is a lot like me in that regard: he's a creature of habit, loves routines, woke up at night for five weeks straight when he changed daycare 18 months ago, etc. He doesn't embrace change, to say the least.

It's also worth saying that he's very connected to his neighbor friends, they come and go between our apartments. My husband told him this morning that we'd be moving soon, and he reacted strongly, saying this was his house, that he never wanted to move, etc.

How can we prepare and accompany him through this process? And how do I not add to the problem since it will also be very hard for me to leave our wonderful building?

Thanks for the advice!

Maud"

So this is the trait from the temperament class, known as adaptability. Adaptability is the ease or difficulty with changes, and more specifically, we are talking about less adaptable in this case. People who are less adaptable: prefer the familiar, become shy with new people and places, like toys, room and teachers to remain the same, need more time to deal with change. I have one of my children who is less adaptable. He has one or two close friends, He's a total homebody and except for the struggles of learning online, he's doing just fine with staying home! He does not like change so when we told the kids about our divorce, he was the one who cried out immediately. We knew he would be the one to take it hard. Of course nothing has changed. We're all still in the same house and will be for the foreseeable future, at least through the pandemic.

So how do you help a child who prefers the familiar with a bigger change like this?

First, you want to discuss the upcoming change and talk as positively as possible, what are all the positives about the move? Obviously more room is a positive. Is he getting his own room or a bigger room? The other positive is that it is really close and he can see his friends all the time and show his friends his new home too. You are going to spend a lot of time talking and reassuring. Answer any questions as positively as you can. Allow him to decide as much as possible about his space, the room, where his furniture will go, books, any toys or stuffed animals. Giving him as much control of the space as possible. When you do move, Help him to make new friends by inviting a new child over to play. And I'm guessing you will be doing this anyway, but be sure to maintain the same family routine as much as possible.

Alright everybody! Don't forget to check out the Your Village YouTube channel and subscribe to get the new bi-weekly quick parenting tips coming out, starting this week. You can either search for Your Village. The channel shows up as #1 or #2 in the search. I'd love to see this grow.

If you have a parenting question you'd like answered, send an email to Podcast@YourVillageOnline.com.

Thanks for listening and see you next week!