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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP

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No. of pages 6

NOTE: Please make a note of new phone numbers in above right hand corner.

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KEITH W. MIELKE, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research

September 3, 1992

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear George:

A governmentally sponsored conference on children's television has recently been announced, but I don't know how widely. You should know about it, so as to ponder both its motivation and plausible outcomes. Attached is a fax copy of the announcement. Perhaps you would be interested in attending?

Hope you are enjoying the last few hours of Summer!

Warmest regards,

Keith

CABLE: SESAMEST NEW YORK/RCA TELEX 236166

TELEVISION AND THE PREPARATION OF THE MIND FOR LEARNING

CRITICAL QUESTIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION ON THE DEVELOPING BRAINS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

October 2, 1992
Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

FACT: Growing brains are shaped to a significant degree by repeated experiences in the environment.

FACT: American children spend more hours in front of the television set than they do in school.

FACT: Teachers and employers throughout the U.S. report changes in students' learning habits: shorter attention spans, reduced ability to listen and process oral language, difficulty analyzing and persisting on tasks, faltering oral and written expression.

FACT: Very little research has been conducted on the effects of television viewing on the growing brain.

The Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring this one-day conference, which will bring together psychologists, educators, and neuroscientists to begin an exploration of this fundamental question: *How can we find out what television is doing to or for our children's most basic foundations for learning?* Related questions include:

- How does television viewing affect the development of thinking?
- Is our national "epidemic" of attention deficit disorders related to common features of children's programming?
- What is the relationship between television environments and development of the brain's language circuits in the early years?
- Does television viewing make the brain more or less efficient?
- How does television viewing influence reading development?
- How can television be most constructively utilized to develop critical reasoning skills?
- Will increasingly demanding visual environments have specific cognitive consequences?
- Which features of children's programming have the most beneficial effects, and which should be avoided?

Researchers have looked at the content of television and its possible effects on children (e.g. violence), but surprisingly, no one has addressed the more fundamental issue of the physical effects of viewing on the developing nervous system. We will look at how these questions may be addressed from several perspectives, including behavioral studies, neuroimaging, and electrical activity mapping of brain function.

The significance of this issue justifies a concerted effort from all who are concerned with our children's — and our society's — well-being. This conference may be of interest to researchers and practitioners in a wide range of disciplines, including neuroscientists, psychologists, educators, early childhood specialists, speech and language professionals, media experts, and policy makers. Participants can expect officials to be present from Federal government agencies involved in research and grant-making in the fields of neuropsychology, child development and early childhood education.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families

AGENDA

7:30-8:30	**Registration and Continental breakfast**
8:30	**Welcoming Remarks** *Wade F. Horn, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families* *Jason Turner, Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families*
8:45	**Why Do We Need to Study this Issue?** *Jane M. Healy, author "Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think"* Plasticity of the Brain: Enrichment Versus Impoverishment *Marian Cleeves Diamond, University of California, Berkeley* Television Viewing and Children: Some Potential Hazards and Possibilities *Jerome L. Singer, Yale University* Potential Impact of Media Environments on Children's Brain Development: Implications for Language Development and Attention *Jane Holmes Bernstein, Children's Hospital, Boston*
10:00	**Questions and Discussion in Panel Format**
10:30	**What Do We Need to Find Out?** Television and Attention *Daniel R. Anderson, University of Massachusetts, Amherst* TV and Attention Span: Effects of Different Formats *Jennings Bryant, University of Alabama* Advanced Television Systems: Implications for Studying Children and Television *Byron B. Reeves, Stanford University*
11:30	**Questions and Discussion in Panel Format**
12 Noon	**Luncheon and Keynote Speaker** Preparing Children for Learning—The Challenge for Policy Makers *Jo Anne B. Barnhart, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families*
1:30	**Further Areas of Research Interest and Discussion of Possible Research Designs** Positron Emission Tomography Studies of Intelligence, Learning, and Memory: Implications for the Effect of Television on Brain Development *Richard J. Haier, University of California, Irvine* The Brain Controlling Itself: Attentional Control and the Development of Thinking *Sidney J. Segalowitz, Brock University, Ontario* Training Critical Viewing Skills: A Response to the Hazards of Television *Dorothy G. Singer, Yale University*
2:30	**Questions and Discussion in Panel Format**
3:00	**Break**
3:15	**Open Panel and Discussion with All Presenters**
4:15	**Closing Remarks**
4:30	Adjourn

PRESENTERS

Dr. Daniel R. Anderson is Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Dr. Anderson has written extensively on attention, children's attention to television, and issues concerning television's effects on children. He is a co-editor with Jennings Bryant of *Children's Understanding of Television: Research on Attention and Comprehension.*

Jo Anne B. Barnhart is Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. In her capacity as Assistant Secretary, Ms. Barnhart manages over sixty HHS programs, including Head Start, Child Welfare, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Ms. Barnhart was formerly Associate Commissioner for Family Assistance, Social Security Administration.

Dr. Jane Holmes Bernstein is Senior Associate in Psychology at Children's Hospital in Boston, as well as Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School. She is also Director of the Neuropsychology Program, Department of Psychiatry, at Children's Hospital.

Dr. Jennings Bryant is Professor of Communication and Director of the Institute for Communication Research at the University of Alabama. He is the co-editor of *Children's Understanding of Television*, among numerous other works. Dr. Bryant was a Spencer Fellow at Children's Television Workshop, where he worked on "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company."

Dr. Marian Cleeves Diamond is Professor of Anatomy and Director of the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley. Her major area of research interest is environmental effects on the brain. She is the author of 125 scientific articles and three books, including *Enriching Heredity.*

Dr. Richard J. Haier is Professor of Psychiatry, University of California, Irvine. His research interest is in investigating the biological basis of intelligence and personality using brain imaging with Positron Emission Tomography (PET).

Dr. Jane M. Healy has a Ph.D. in educational psychology and is in private practice. Additionally, Dr. Healy is a lecturer and consultant, and serves on the faculty of Cleveland State University. Her long-time research interest has been the relationship between learning environments and neurodevelopment. She is the author of *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think.*

Dr. Byron B. Reeves is Director, Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, as well as Professor, Department of Communication, Stanford University. His research focus is on the psychological processing of television with particular emphasis on features of advanced television systems.

Dr. Sidney J. Segalowitz is Professor of Psychology at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. Dr. Segalowitz is an authority on the development of children's brain hemispheres. His major research interest is in melding what is known about brain structure and brain growth with what is known about intellectual development in children and adults.

Dr. Dorothy G. Singer is Co-Director of the Yale Family Television Research and Consultation Center, a Research Affiliate at the Yale Child Study Center, and a Research Scientist in Yale's Department of Psychology. Her current research includes work in the area of the effects of television on children. She co-authored *Television, Imagination and Aggression: A Study of Preschoolers.*

Dr. Jerome L. Singer is Professor of Psychology and Director of Graduate Studies at Yale University. He is also Co-Director of the Yale Family Television Research and Consultation Center. Dr. Singer is the author of over 200 technical articles on thought processes, imagery, personality, and psychotherapy, as well as the author or editor of more than fifteen books, including *Television, Imagination, and Aggression.*

HOW TO REGISTER

Pre-registration

Pre-registration is required, although there is no registration fee. If you wish to attend, please complete and return the registration form by September 15, 1992 to:

Ellsworth Associates, Inc.
Technical Support Services
8381 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200
Vienna, VA 22182-3839

If you would like additional information about hotel accommodations or registration procedures, please call Ms. Laura Vande Wiele at Ellsworth Associates, Inc., at (703) 821-3090. Requests for additional information on the conference agenda should be directed to Ms. Siobhán Roder at (202) 401-5115.

Hotel Reservations

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Omni Shoreham Hotel at special conference rates. Please make your room reservation directly with the hotel by calling 1-800-THE-OMNI. To obtain the special conference rate be sure to indicate that you are attending the national conference on *Television and the Preparation of the Mind for Learning*. The rates are $96 for a single room and $112 for a double room plus 11 percent local tax and $1.50 occupancy tax. These rates are valid for stays occurring three days before or three days after the conference. Room reservations must be made by September 7, 1992 to obtain these special rates. The hotel is located at 2500 Calvert Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008. The Woodley Park-Zoo Metro Station, which is on the Red Line, is only two blocks from the hotel.

Travel Arrangements

Passport Executive Travel (PET) has been designated as the official travel agency for this conference. PET will assist you in planning and ticketing your air, rail, rental car, and hotel reservations to Washington, DC. To make reservations through PET, contact them at 1-800-222-9800 between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday. Please indicate that you will be attending the national conference on *Television and the Preparation of the Mind for Learning*.

Continental Airlines and TWA are the official carriers for the conference. They are offering significantly discounted airfares to the Metropolitan Washington, DC area. To receive these heavily discounted fares you must purchase your ticket through Passport Executive Travel. Fares obtained through PET will be valid for travel three days before and three days after the conference date. Please call as soon as possible as seats may be limited. To obtain these discounted conference fares, airline reservations must be made through PET by September 7, 1992.