“No Silly Girls’ Films!” Analysis of Estonian Preschool Children’s Gender Specific Tastes in Media Favourites and their Possible Implications for Preschool Learning Practices

# Details

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## Topics

* Social mediation
* Literacy and skills
* Risks and harms

## Sample

Our final sample included children from three municipal preschools—one from a big city with 4,20,000 inhabitants (n=31), one from a small town with 34,000
inhabitants (n=18) and one from a rural area with 250 inhabitants (n=12).

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

High-quality content online for children and young people

# Abstract

Although children often look for guidance on what is gender-appropriate behaviour from the media, children’s media favourites are still an underused learning resource in preschools, especially in the context of engaging in gender and values education. Focus-group interviews were conducted with 61 children aged from 5.5 to 7 years from three geographically different preschools in Estonia to investigate the nature of media content that Estonian preschool children liked the most and who were the media characters that they considered as role models. The findings are presented with suggestions on how to use children’s media favourites in the preschool curriculum. Our findings revealed strong gender-specific tastes in the media content that the preschool children liked and the characters that they favoured. While boys preferred action-adventure and scary movies and named mainly superheroes or characters with superpowers as their favourites, girls enjoyed family shows, films and comedies and liked characters such as fairies, angels, princesses and similar fictional characters. The findings indicated that preschool children are an active and enthusiastic media audience. The children eagerly took on the role of co-performers of media experiences, acted out aspects of the programs and mimicked the activities of their favourites. We offer suggestions for teachers on how to make use of children’s media favourites in teaching so as to help the children not only to negotiate issues of gender but also to understand how the media shape behaviour, values, and emotional well-being.

# Outcome

"The findings indicated that preschool children are an active and enthusiastic media audience. The children eagerly took on the role of co-performers of media experiences, acted out aspects of the programs and mimicked the activities of their favourites. We offer suggestions for teachers on how to make use of children’s media favourites in teaching so as to help the children not only to negotiate issues of gender but also to understand how the media shape behaviour, values, and emotional well-being." (Siibak Vinter, 2014, p. 356).