

The Danville News
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"Molech and Moana"
Word Count: 750

The Muppets helped persuade our daughter that not all screen time is harmful for toddlers. During their visit the DVD provided momentary calm during a high stress storm. Our grand-daughter fell in love with Fozzie Bear (wocka! wocka!) and instantly learnt to sing along to "The Cat Came Back." Still, there is wisdom in restricting screen time. I discovered this the bad way when I let my three year old son watch with me the monster movie, "The Blob." He couldn't sleep for three days.

Our daughter is right to restrict screen time, admitting it's tough to fight the modern world. Pediatricians advise no screen media for infants under 2 years. Although we policed television watching less than does our daughter and her husband, we wanted to surround our children with great literature, great art, great music. It took.

Grand-daughter's parents did bend house rules to allow her to watch portions of the movie, "Moana," but only on weekends. She dances around the house singing Moana songs. They're a musical bunch. A library also fills a wall of the play room. Their kids dress like kids, sharing hand-me-downs with friends. Our grand-daughter speaks the magic words of "please" and "thank you." Doing chores, even at her age, is expected. She's also familiar with being told, "No." Kids without chores end up spoiled teenagers and bratty adults. In time we trust they will enjoy age appropriate parties. Pedicure parties for 5 year olds is more damaging than cute. It's ridiculous to give presents to each child who attends a birthday party lest someone pouts. You get presents on your birthday!

Protective rather than smothering, our grand-daughter's parents encourage creative play. They keep laptops and televisions out of bedrooms. They avoid battery operated toys that kids only watch perform. Most modern toys ruin the imagination. You give a kid a costume and they get disappointed when re-enacting Spiderman isn't as thrilling as the movie.

There's a price. A child psychologist mentioned how years ago he'd ask a child what they wanted to be when they grew up. They'd say, "I want to be a fireman, policeman." Now they say, "I want to be rich." Our media – from Disney to Paw Patrol -- are masters of consumer indoctrination. Disney's job is to sell them stuff. George Lucas admitted he's not a movie producer but in the business of selling lunchboxes. There's a reason he was inducted into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame.

Entertainment is how they manipulate kids, profit off kids, devour kid's souls. They don't care how. Make sure your children understand that the media doesn't care about them, they only want to use them. The Media Education Foundation, in a frightening, alarming, disturbing documentary called "Consuming Kids," reported how the primary purpose of computers and TV screens is neither to teach nor entertain but "to deliver eyeballs to advertisers." To sell product, they'll keep kids watching by any means necessary. This explains the violence, sex, base humor, anything to stimulate the maximum jolt of cheap emotion with the least amount of effort. Have you noticed? Our kids our becoming desensitized to base humor, sex, violence. The media has noticed, that's why they're intensifying these jolts. Said one marketing vice-president: "Our role, our initiative, is to move product and if we know you move product with a certain creative execution, placed in a certain type of media vehicle, then

we've done our job. They are tomorrow's consumers, tomorrow's adult consumers, so start talking with them now, build that relationship when they're younger, then you've got them as adults."

They do it to us adults also. How many commercials have you seen advertising gambling apps for your phone?

Study TV commercials. See how many products are marketed for their social meaning rather for the thing itself. Do you want to be cool? Then you must have this. What you buy is who you are. Our product will make you happy. You are what you own. Worse, they make our kids believe that what they buy determines their value, if you don't have it you are nobody. They've always targeted adults this way, but increasingly our children are the bulls-eye. One marketing company sponsored secret girl clubs, which recruited them to test products and spy for them. What's an advertiser's strategy? Cradle to the grave brand loyalty. Try to find an infant product that isn't branded.

We once, the Bible tells me so, sacrificed our children to the god, Molech. We still do.