



DISASTER AND WAR FOOTAGE AFFECTS CHILDREN EVERYWHERE



Children using social media, or watching news coverage currently on television are being exposed to footage that is very difficult to cope with - floods, Covid 19, and the war in Ukraine just for starters.

Numerous research studies tell us that the impacts of such exposure can seriously disturb children. US researchers Jonathan Comer and Anthony Dick use brain scans to show how [simply watching news coverage](#) of disasters can raise children's anxiety and trigger responses in their brains that put them at risk of post-traumatic stress symptoms. Their research also explores why some children are more vulnerable to these effects than others. Discussing these findings, [this article](#) in The Conversation says *Understanding*

which factors help determine whether disaster exposure will lead to serious mental health problems may help identify children at greatest risk for PTSD, facilitate [early intervention](#) and help develop targeted mental health outreach in the aftermath of disasters.... Sensationalized 24-hour news cycles on television and online are [part of the reason](#), [studies suggest](#). These media are designed to attract viewers and keep them engaged. This is especially true for content on social media, which often contains [more graphic images](#) and scenes than typically broadcast by more traditional news sources. It's important for parents to be aware of and to engage their children in discussing what they may have seen, and to assess whether this may be disturbing them. For young children, there's good advice on ways to do this from Australia's [The Sector](#). For older children, Australia's [Raising Children Network](#) provides clear guidance and [The Conversation](#) discusses the Ukraine War and the importance of talking with children.

US PRESIDENT BIDEN TAKES SOCIAL MEDIA TO TASK



President Joe Biden on Tuesday called for Congress ([see State of Union video highlights at 9 mins](#)) to outlaw the use of behavioral-targeting techniques to advertise to children. Biden said in part, to loud applause, *As Frances Haugen, who is here with us tonight, has shown, we must hold social media platforms accountable for the national experiment they're conducting on our children for profit.* Most of Biden's [hour-long speech](#) focused on issues other than the technology industry, but near the

end he took that industry to task, emphasising how tech companies' policies affect young users. *It's time to strengthen privacy protections, ban targeted advertising to children, demand tech companies stop collecting personal data on our children, [he said](#).* In addition to calling for a ban on tracking children for ad-targeting purposes, Biden also criticised social media platforms over well-publicised accusations that they harm young users' emotional well-being. Biden's comments were repeated in [this tweet](#). The White House fact sheet on its mental health agenda with more detail about regulating children's privacy and design of platforms can be read [here](#). You can find out more about the US Congress's Kids Online Safety Act [here](#).

**THE ACCC
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YOUR VIEWS
ON NEW RULES
FOR LARGE DIGITAL
PLATFORMS**

**For more detail see p4
World Roundup.**

small screen

issue 393- February 2022

small screen is published at the beginning of each month and reports on the events of the previous month 11 issues per year (Dec/Jan double issue)

Published by
Australian Council on
Children and the Media
(ACCM)

ACCM is a national, non-profit community organisation. Its mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children.

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Editorial:

In these troubled times, children need healthy happy viewing.



BARBARA BIGGINS OAM
Honorary CEO
ACCM

Children have been dealt a double whammy in the past couple of years: two years of on and off lockdowns, along with screens full of doom, gloom, disaster and violence.

It's no wonder that Australian health and medical bodies and researchers are expressing concern about children's mental health and wellbeing. In 2020, the Victorian Children Commissioner [reported](#) that most children and young people felt the pandemic had a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people said that they were also distressed by news and social media, with many having fears for their future.

[Australian research](#) on the impact of Covid 19 on the lives and mental health of adolescents published in 2021 reported that *three quarters of the sample experienced a worsening in mental health, since the pandemic began, with negative impacts reported on learning, friendships and family relationships*. There were also higher levels of sleep disturbance, psychological distress and health anxiety relative to normative samples. On technology use, the study found that *most young people reported either 2 – 4 h or 4 – 6 h daily screen use. There was a still a significant proportion of young people reporting higher levels of use (> 8 h) each day, with 72% reporting increased technology use to connect with others, usually spending around 4 - h online for interaction. Almost three quarters of the sample reported increased technology use since the start of the pandemic.*

In January this year, the [Medical Journal of Australia](#) cast a community child health lens over the situation, identifying 11 impact areas, under three broad categories: *child-level factors (poorer mental health, poorer child health and development, poorer academic achievement); family-level factors that affect children (poorer parent mental health, reduced family income and job losses, increased household stress, increased abuse and neglect, poorer maternal and newborn health); and service-level factors that affect children (school closures, reduced access to health care, increased use of technology for learning, connection and health care).*

Medical journals [around the world](#) have recently published similar findings, with

[Canadian research](#) finding evidence that stress due to social isolation was associated with deterioration in multiple mental health domains during COVID-19. In addition to high screen use and social isolation, the worsening of child mental health could be related to the displacement of sleep, physical exercise, and prosocial activities. The exposure to online bullying, stressful news, and harmful advertisements during screen use could also contribute to poor child mental health during the pandemic.

In the wake of COVID-19, The American Academy of Pediatrics has released a [new set of guidelines](#), urging parents to “preserve offline experiences” and to try following these updated guidelines:

1. Make a plan. Talk with your kids about what your daily structure will be, how you will handle stress, and when you will take breaks from tele-work or schoolwork to relax and connect with each other.
2. Communicate with teachers. Talk about what educational online and offline activities your children can do.
3. Use social media for good. Check in with neighbours, friends and loved ones. If schools are closed, find out if there are ways to help students who need meals or internet access for at-home learning.
4. Use media for social connection. Social distancing can be isolating. If kids are missing their school friends or other family, try video chats or social media to stay in touch.
5. Be selective about what your children watch. Use trusted sources to find positive content.
6. Use media together. This is a great opportunity to monitor what your older children are seeing online and follow what your children are learning. Even watching a family movie together can help everyone relax while you appreciate the storytelling and meaning that movies can bring.

When children are using screens, ACCM offers an excellent way to find much-needed, happy, healthy viewing. Via its child development based movie review service [Know Before You Go](#), parents can get reliable information about content (e.g. what's likely to be scary or violent) and recommendations for age-appropriate viewing. It's a start to finding viewing that supports children's development, not harms it.

ADVERTISING

Wise, J.
Adverts for cosmetic surgery targeting teenagers to be banned from next year.
Bmj-British Medical Journal, Nov 25 2021, Vol. 375

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#SponsoredAds: monitoring influencer marketing to young audiences.
Media Policy Briefs (23) 2022. London School of Economics and Political Science

BODY IMAGE

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Early adolescent social media-related body dissatisfaction: associations with depressive symptoms, social anxiety, peers, and celebrities.
Journal Of Developmental And Behavioral Pediatrics, Jun-Jul 2021, Vol. 42 (5) 401-407

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Links between exposure to sexualized Instagram images and body image concerns in girls and boys.
Journal of Media Psychology-Theories Methods And Applications, Jan 2022, Vol. 34 (1) 55-62

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Do peer and parental norms influence media content-induced cyber aggression?
Computers In Human Behavior, Apr 2022, Vol. 129

GAMBLING

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Money used in gaming is associated with problem gambling: Results of the ESPAD 2019 Finland.
Journal of Behavioral Addictions, Dec 2021, Vol. 10 (4) 932-940

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The prevalence and correlates of gambling in Australian secondary school students.
Journal of Gambling Studies, Jan 2022

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Frontiers in Psychology, Jan 24 2022, Vol. 12

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Entertainment video games for academic learning: a systematic review.
Journal of Educational Computing Research, Jan 2022

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Media literacy needs early guidance and company.
Praxis Der Kinderpsychologie Und Kinderpsychiatrie, Feb 2022, Vol. 71 (2) 176-186

MOBILE PHONE EMISSIONS

Castano-Vinyals, G; Sadetzki, S; Vermeulen, R; et al.
Wireless phone use in childhood and adolescence and neuroepithelial brain tumours: Results from the international MOBI-Kids study.
Environment International, Feb 2022, Vol. 160

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Haynes, A; McVeigh, J; Lester, L; Eastwood, P.R; Straker, L; Mori, T.A; Beilin, L; Green, D.J.
Relationship between TV watching during childhood and adolescence and fitness in adulthood in the Raine Study cohort.
European Journal of Sport Science, Jan 2022.

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Association of night-time screen-viewing with adolescents' diet, sleep, weight status, and adiposity.
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health, Jan 2022, Vol. 19 (2)

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Pressure, preoccupation, and porn:

The relationship between internet pornography, gendered attitudes, and sexual coercion in young adults.

Psychology of Popular Media, 2022. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000393>

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Kandola, A; Cruz, B.D; Hayes, J.F; Owen, N; Dunstan, D.W; Hallgren, M.
Impact on adolescent mental health of replacing screen-use with exercise: A prospective cohort study.
Journal Of Affective Disorders, Mar 15 2022, Vol. 301 240-247

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Parental psychological problems were associated with higher screen time and the use of mature-rated media in children.
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Gaming behaviors and the association with sleep duration, social jetlag, and difficulties falling asleep among Norwegian adolescents.
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Feb 2022, Vol. 19 (3)

SMART TOYS

Buquerque, O.D; Fantinato, M; Hung, P.C.K; Peres, S.M; Iqbal, F; Rehman, U; Shah, M.U.
Recommendations for a smart toy parental control tool.
Journal of Supercomputing, Feb 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA

Alshamrani, S; Abusnaina, A; Abuhamad, M; Nyang, D; Mohaisen, D.
Hate, obscenity, and insults: measuring the exposure of children to inappropriate comments in YouTube.
Web Conference 2021: Companion of The World Wide Web Conference, Apr 19-23, 2021 508-515

AUS | ACCC SEEKS VIEWS FROM THE PUBLIC

The ACCC has released a [discussion paper](#), outlining options for addressing harms to competition, consumers, and business users in a range of areas dominated by large digital platforms, including social media, search, app marketplaces, general online retail marketplaces and ad tech. [Seeking views from the public by April 1, 2022.](#)

Courtesy: ACCC

US | SEVERAL STATES' ATTORNEYS GENERAL LAUNCH LAW SUITS AGAINST TIKTOK

Anxiety, depression and social pressure faced by young people prompt coalition of US states' attorneys general to announce nationwide investigation into potential harm of strategies and designs used by TikTok. Read more [here](#).

Courtesy: Jusrist.org

US | SENATOR ED MARKEY PUSHES AGAINST CORPORATE CULTURE

Ed Markey [renews his push](#) to pass legislation to prohibit companies from collecting data from teens under 16 without their opt-in consent. Current legislation protects those only under 13, but Markey wants to expand measures and urges *courage* in "taking on a corporate culture of exploitation, of monetization, of the information about kids".

Courtesy: Media Post

US | PREDICTABLY THE AD INDUSTRY STRONGLY OPPOSES PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO BAN SURVEILLANCE ADVERTISING

A bill prohibiting ad networks from using personal information, including pseudonymous data, to target ads to consumers has been vigorously opposed by several Ad Industry groups. The proposed law would mean that companies could still target ads based on the material displayed on the same page as the ad, and to use limited location-targeting, but would prohibit targeting information based on information about people's race, national origin, religion, sex, disability and other protected status.

Courtesy: Media Post

US | HELPING CHILDREN WITH IMAGES OF WAR

Kids who are exposed to war via media may be more likely to develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. [This article](#) suggests some good strategies for parents wanting to help their children cope with the current rise in exposure due to conflict in Ukraine.

Courtesy: USAToday

US | DISNEY + ADDS MATURE CONTENT TO STREAMING SERVICE

Disney snaps up the chance to broaden its appeal to adults by adding Marvel films to line-up. Will new content restrictions on user profiles be enough to reduce the risk of alienating parents who signed up to Disney+ as a 'safe' option for their kids? Read more [here](#).

Courtesy: Media Post

US | WEBINAR: INDUSTRY TELLS HOW TO TRACK CONSUMERS WHO DON'T WANT TO BE TRACKED

Even consumers who try to protect their privacy on line are vulnerable. [This Webinar](#) for digital marketing professionals, explains how to reach "unidentifiable targets" by using predictive behavioural targeting.

Courtesy: Ad Week

US | DECEPTIVE PACKAGING ON SUGAR-SWEETENED DRINKS

Manipulative marketing tactics create a false impression that sugary drinks are healthy for children. Fruit-flavoured drinks and toddler milks are big offenders and parents feel misled by their packaging. More needs to be done to increase transparency about the ingredients in these products. Read more [here](#).

Courtesy: Medical Xpress

UK | BBC CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF DEDICATED CHILDREN'S CHANNEL CBEEBIES

The Guardian commemorates this occasion with a [list of favourite children's shows](#) from the past two decades. Not suprisingly, Australia's very own *Bluey* makes it onto the list.

Courtesy: The Guardian

UK | INFLUENCER INQUIRY

Covid pandemic's [impact on children's media usage](#) causes concern amongst parents, prompting an inquiry into the power of social media influencers. The UK's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (DCMS) "[Influencer Inquiry](#)" looks into the lack of regulation surrounding advertising power of Influencers.

Courtesy: London School of Economics

US | KIDS FLOCK TO FACEBOOK'S METAVERSE DESPITE DANGERS

Facebook's new Metaverse is attracting children, and lack of regulation and protections in the virtual space could create safety issues and a rise in predatory behaviours. This is a common problem on other social media and gaming sites, but one that Facebook is doing little to address. Read more [here](#).

Courtesy: The Washington Post

GERMANY | NEW INTERVENTION FOR GAMING AND INTERNET ADDICTION LOOKS PROMISING

[A clinical trial](#) of a new Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-based intervention called PROTECT showed promising results. At-risk adolescents who were treated with the PROTECT intervention showed a significant reduction in symptoms compared to a control group.

Courtesy: JAMA Network

USA | VIDEO GAMES CAN SPY ON YOU

Gaming software grows more sophisticated and incorporates complex tracking and recognition technologies to gather data on users. Gaming is seen as an excellent medium for tracking, and a rich resource for research into player psychology and cognition. Players' actions can be used to infer personality traits and predict behaviour. But where this data ends up and what it is used for is the bigger question. You can read more in [this article](#).

Courtesy: Wired.com

NETHERLANDS | NEW WAY TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S ADVERTISING LITERACY

Researchers have developed an instrument to measure how well children can discern between advertising and other media. Results are discussed in [this report](#)

Courtesy: Media Psychology