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| |  | | --- | | Some people believe that increasing violence in the media is the cause of increasing violence in our society, especially among children. Others believe that children's peer groups and parental role models are a much more powerful influence on children's behavior.  Write a response in which you discuss which view more closely aligns with your own position and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should address both of the views presented above. | |

Safety and societal harmony is very important when raising a child in this world. When the media covers violent news, one may argue that it can have an impact on children that may cause them to change their ways of thinking. However, I disagree with the former position stated in the prompt, and I more closely align with the latter. Considering that the current age is one of great technological advancements with an increasingly connected society, it only augments the need for us to make sure that young people are exposed to good ideas and information, while also not completely obscuring from them the bad in the world. There are three main aspects to this issue that must be addressed.

First, increasing violence in the media is not a cause of increasing violence in the society; it is quite the opposite. The media is a reflection of our society, and believing otherwise would be quite foolish - where do media entities get violent stories from? If society did not experience the kinds of violence that it actually does, then the media would not have such news to cover. This would make any reasonable person consider the root issues of the problem at hand: Violent acts have been observed to be in higher frequencies in less-educated and unhealthy communities. If social welfare measures were taken, by improving education and healthcare facilities, them the levels of violence will go down, and children would thus be less likely to be exposed to such crimes.

Second, children are not completely naive, and do indeed understand what is morally acceptable and what is not. One may argue that being exposed to violence may affect this, as stated earlier. But this reduces children to mere media-consuming machines. They have complex lives, they engage in conversations with friends and family, they look up to celebrity role models and follow them on social media - Assuming that children are shaped by the increasing violence in the media is to assume that they have no support system or peers. Children are more likely to be shaped by the ideas of the people whom they are closer to, like peer groups and their parents. They may not possess the ability to reason out complex scenarios, but their moral compasses are not immediately skewed by watching news about crime. If anything, their parents can talk about it with them, explaining to them why those things are bad, and how people are working to solve these issues.

Finally, it is reasonable to concede to some degree that media does influence children. However, it is not a ‘cause’ of violence. Take for example the several school shootings that take place in the United States every year: This is not a direct cause of children absorbing violent ideas and acting on them - in most of these cases, it has been proven that students engaging in such activities did so due to a combination of untreated mental illnesses and bad relations with family and peers. Simply eliminating violence from the media would not address these core issues. If the education and healthcare systems would have ensured that children's mental health is also looked after, then countless deaths could have been avoided. Hence, as the second view of the prompt states, children's peer groups and parental role models (or family, at large) are a much more powerful, and necessary, influence on children's behaviour.

In conclusion, this is a complex issue, and there do exist some arguments that favour media's role in being a cause of societal violence. However, these arguments fail to address central issues, and hence allow violence to persist in society; it is akin to treating a disease by treating its symptoms - more often than not, solving the cause of the disease is more effective. Hence, the importance of peer groups and family in a child's life cannot be understated.