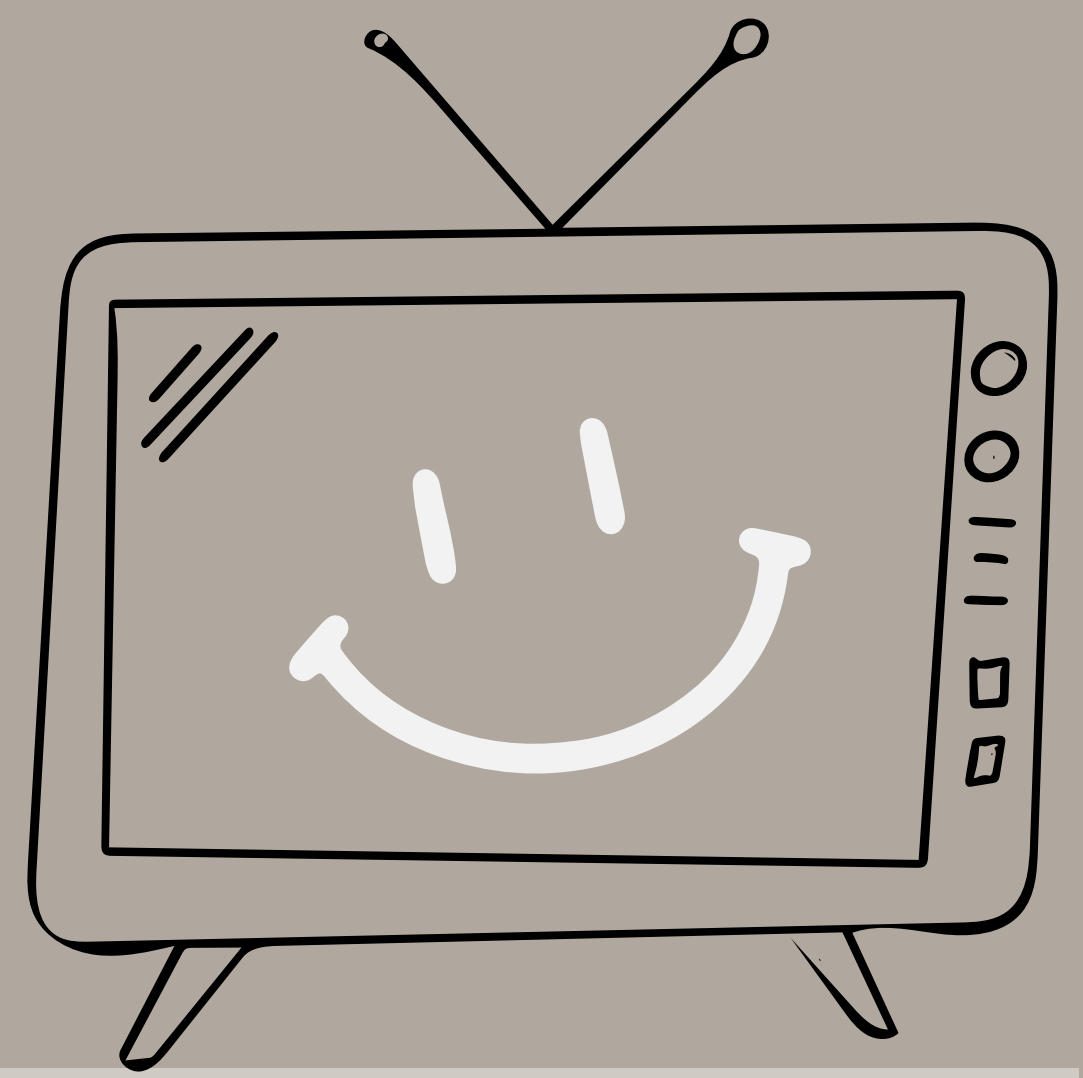


Toddlers and the Telly:

A latent profile analysis of children's television time and content and behavioral outcomes one year later.



THE GIST: Children between the ages of 2 and 4 spend a lot of time watching media, but some of the long term ramifications are still unclear. Researchers in this study investigated what media children watched, how much, and its impact on behavior, including aggression, social interactions, and problematic media use. They found three main groups: high media users, low media users, and those exposed to particularly aggressive content. Interestingly, what they found was that children who were watching more aggression on the screen demonstrated more aggressive behavior than kids who didn't, regardless of how much or little screen time they were getting. The children engaging in more aggressive media were also shown to have less prosocial behavior than the other groups.

THE TAKEAWAY: We know that children in this age group are highly influential, and we've been seeing that much media or media of lesser quality can do a lot of damage in the long run. It's important to remember how malleable their young minds are and to be aware of what kinds of media they are observing and how often they are viewing it. Violence in media in the adult world looks much more aggressive than it might in a youth program, and the study noted that this might be why it gets overlooked. One thing we can be proactive about is the actual content of children's shows (and to not just accept it because of its genre). Television programs can be a great educational tool - as long as we are careful to not let violence seep in unnoticed!