

Psychologists research effect of television on children's creativity

Parents of three-year-olds are being asked to take part in research by psychologists at Staffordshire University that examines the effect of television on children's creativity.

The project is looking for 60 young children and their parents to take part in an assessment at the University's newly opened Psychology Children's Lab in the Science Centre.

"There's a lot of speculation that television makes children behave in certain ways but there's actually very little scientific research that has looked at what affect it has," explained Dr Sarah Rose, Director of Psychology and Children's Lab.

"This research is ground-breaking and will provide much needed scientific evidence about the effects of different paced television."

When they arrive at the lab, the children will be asked to play with an "unusual box", a specially made toy with colourful loops, holes and steps inside.

"The idea is that the box is like nothing the children have ever seen before. They'll be given some extra items to play with and the way they interact with these will give us a base level of each individual child's creativity," said Dr Rose.

Some of these children will then watch either a fast or slow paced episode of Postman Pat while others will look at books and complete jigsaws. After this the children will take part in a range of fun activities designed to test their creativity and imagination.

"We really want to see how imaginative the children can be so we'll ask things like "Can you move like a tree?" and ask them to come up with as many different ways to place paper cups into a bucket. It's all quite fun really."

The results of the activities will be measured against how creative the children were with the "unusual box", to see if watching television had any affect.

The visit to the 'Psychology Children's Lab' will last approximately an hour and parents will complete two questionnaires, one about their child's TV watching habits, the other about their child's creativity.

Parents will receive a £10 High Street Voucher and children will receive a novelty t-shirt to thank them for participating.

The experiment follows on from previous research by Sarah that looked at the influence of fast and slow paced television on children's problem-solving, concentration and attention.

"One of the most interesting findings was that some of the children didn't seem to be watching the television but when we asked them about the programme afterwards they could tell us everything that happened."

"So even though children might be off playing with their toys and appear to not be paying attention, they are actually still taking it in."

Sarah added: "It is exciting to now be working with local children and their parents to find out whether television really does affect creativity. Television plays such a big part in many people's lives and can have huge influence. The only way we can begin to understand how it affects us is by undertaking experiments like this."

For more information about the experiment and to register to take part visit the [Children's Lab blog page](#) or contact Dr Sarah Rose on 01782 295710 or childrenslab@staffs.ac.uk.

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