

# Press Release

## The new *Maya the Bee* most popular TV character among girls - *SpongeBob* still in the lead

Representative study on the favourite media characters of German preschoolers

Munich, 9 April 2014 – The International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) recently asked children aged three to five about their favourite television characters. For the first time in years, there was a noticeable change in the favourite characters of the girls surveyed: these are no longer pink princesses, but self-determined female TV characters such as *Maya the Bee* and *Bibi Blocksberg*.

373 three- to five-year-old girls and boys from all over Germany were asked about their favourite TV characters. As in the past 12 years, *SpongeBob* is in first place among preschoolers, followed by *Benjamin Blümchen* (*Benjamin the Elephant*) and *Bob the Builder*. Heroes and heroines from public service television, such as *Biene Maja*, *KiKANiNCHEN* and the *Sandman* (*Sandmännchen*), made it to places four to eight.

1. SpongeBob SquarePants
2. Benjamin Blümchen, Mickey Mouse
3. Bob the Builder
4. Maya the Bee
5. KiKANiNCHEN
6. Garfield, Sandman (Sandmännchen)
7. Bibi Blocksberg, The Mouse
8. Yakari

Overall favourite characters of preschoolers in 2014

What is new, however, is the girls' favourite characters: since 2005 the top places had been taken by pink princesses such as *Princess Lillifee* and *Barbie*, but in the latest survey they go to the new version of *Maya the Bee*, *Bibi Blocksberg* and *Sally Bollywood*.

"A very pleasing development", says Dr. Maya Götz, head of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) and of the Prix Jeunesse. "Girls and boys need positive role models, showing how children deal self-reliantly with problems and actively shape the world."

Princesses do this too, but of course they live in a world of material wealth, portrayal often involves

	Boys	Girls
1.	SpongeBob	Maya the Bee
2.	Bob the Builder	Bibi Blocksberg
3.	Benjamin Blümchen	Sally Bollywood, Mickey Mouse

Favourite characters of preschoolers in 2014 by gender

they conform to conventions, and their physical hypersexualization and a wasp waist. The physicality of a *Maya the Bee* or *Bibi*



# Press Release

*Blocksberg*, on the other hand, bears a pleasing resemblance to a child's body, and helps girls in particular to accept themselves and the world they live in.

It is also pleasing to see the popularity of the KiKANiNCHEN or the Mouse (*The Show with the Mouse*). These TV characters represent another important tendency: they are not designed in an explicitly gender-specific way. Girls and boys are, first and foremost, people, and as such, they should be supported in their identity development by children's television.

**Contact person:**

Dr. Maya Götz, Director, International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI)  
Rundfunkplatz 1, 80335 München  
ph.: +49 (0) 89 5900 42264, Internet: [www.izi.de](http://www.izi.de), E-mail: [maya.goetz@brnet.de](mailto:maya.goetz@brnet.de)

Would you like to stop receiving our press releases?  
Then please send a brief email to [izi@br.de](mailto:izi@br.de)