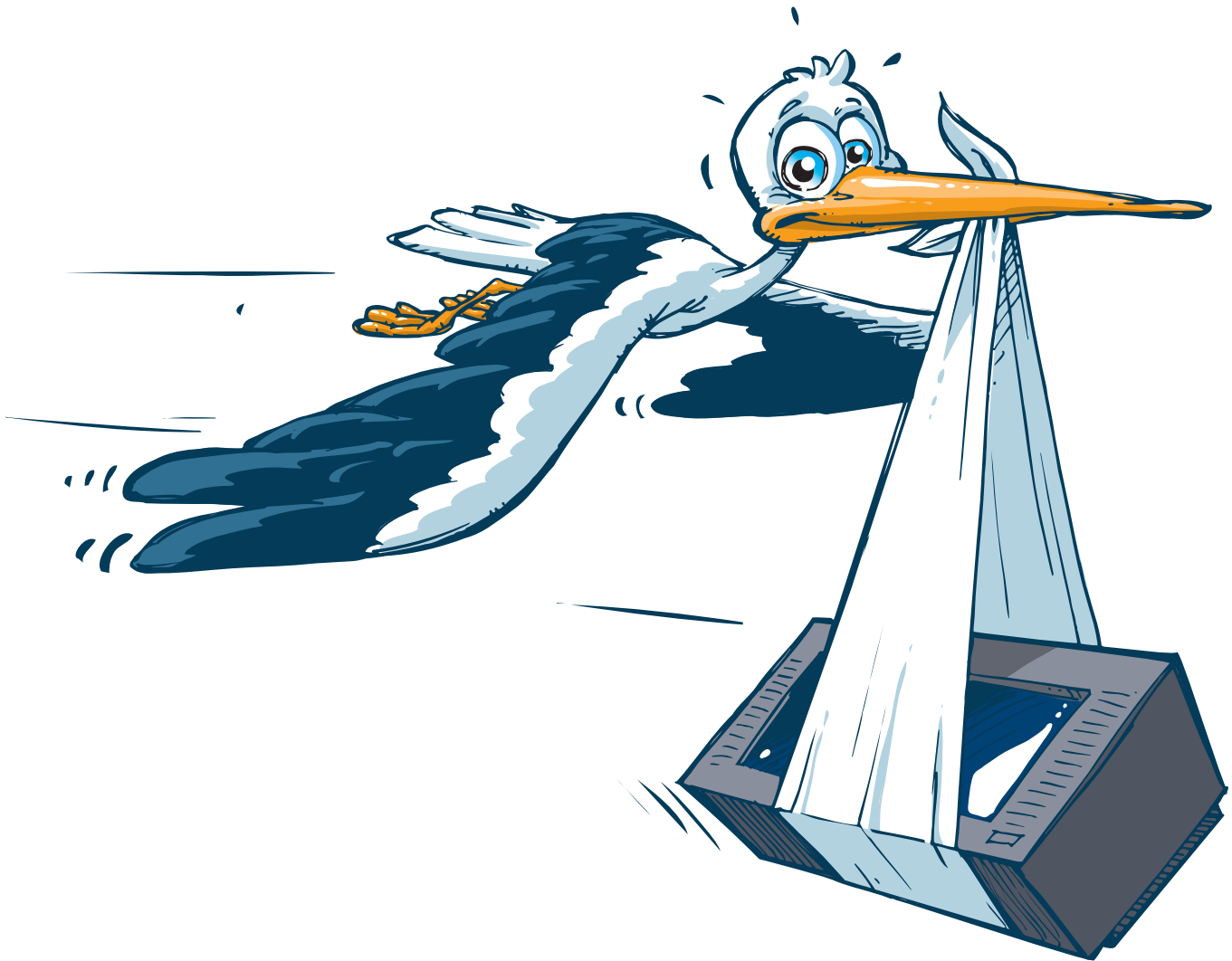


TELEVISION

Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen (IZI)

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Television for TV beginners



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Asked to name a children's television programme, most parents immediately cite a classic like *Sesame Street*, *Mister Rogers' Neighbourhood* or Germany's *The programme with the mouse* – all these programmes are produced specifically for preschool children. Ironically, while preschool shows immediately come to parents' minds, many activists actually recommend that viewers in this age category watch no TV at all. Research on this matter clearly shows that preschool children are a sensitive target group. Still, strict regulations or bans on electronic media for young children are pointless in real, daily life. Preschoolers do watch television for a variety of reasons – entertainment, learning, or a break for tired parents.

From a pedagogical perspective, preschoolers have special needs and deserve their own specially developed shows. We must use research to support high-quality production, by realising problems and possibilities, and turning these into quality standards and educational tips.

Research informs us what 2- to 5-year-olds require of television and how they use it (Singer, Zimmerman, Götz). Developmental psychology offers typical preschool issues and themes which quality TV can address (Neuß). For preschoolers too young to use the remote control, parents support television viewing choices. Therefore, it is important to know the functions TV has in families' everyday life (Götz et al.) as well as the perspective of mothers who want the best programme for their children (Bachmann).

Innovative ideas on how to produce high-quality programmes could emerge from the newest research on early learning English as a second language from TV (Kirch/Speck-Hamdan) or studies of programme innovations like the "Mommy Bar", an informative line for parents at the bottom of the screen (Fisch). International examples offer an outlook on unique cultural perspectives, such as recognising children's needs in the fast-changing Russian society (Mirny), or how programmes can deal sensitively with the challenging contexts Palestinian children are confronted with (Arafat). Bangladesh (Lee) offers a unique insight into TV's role in enhancing children's intellectual development, with the amazing opportunity of observing how the child's knowledge has changed after the introduction of television.

Last but not least, this issue is dedicated to current shows, and exploring what young children like and dislike (Selig, Sistig, Holler). We get an insight into how to make documentaries for preschoolers in the Netherlands (Bult), and see how to manage a 13-hour high-quality preschool channel (Carrington). To meet the needs of the preschool target group we can learn from each other, and exchange TV productions (Schneid) and perspectives on "Television for TV beginners".

TELEVISION

TV FOR TV BEGINNERS

RESEARCH

Norbert Neuß
The world of 2- to 5-year-olds
 Children aged 2 to 5 years deal with 3 important developmental tasks: expanding their action scope, developing a consciousness for future tasks, and becoming aware of their own identity. This article approaches these topics from the children's perspective, by interpreting both their symbols and self-expression.

Maya Götz
TV viewing from before birth up to the age of 5
 Research on TV and children aged up to 5 shows that even babies take an interest in watching television. Yet there is much evidence that indicates television viewing does not begin to be beneficial until preschool age. This, however, depends on the programmes and especially on how often and long children watch.

Dorothy G. Singer
To watch or not to watch ...
 Despite the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that under-2-year-olds should not view TV research has found out: even babies watch, more so do preschoolers. An analysis of 10 preschool programmes shows which learning elements there are "from a toddler's perspective".

M. Kirch/A. Speck-Hamdan
1, 2, 3 with Dora, Elephant & Co.
 How can television be used to introduce children to foreign languages? Preschoolers can learn a second language quite casually. An IZI study examines a variety of TV formats and their potential.

M. Götz/S. Bachmann/O. Hofmann
Just a babysitter?
 When children watch television, it is usually the parents who switch on the set. The findings of a recent IZI study introduced in this article will illuminate what motivates them to do so and what functions television viewing has in families.

Sabrina Bachmann
"That is really not necessary!"
 From a parental point of view, preschool programmes should show examples that help children deal with the world. Advertising as well as the scheduling and missing separation of shows are criticised.

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Shalom M. Fisch et al.
The "Mommy Bar"
 While watching TV, not only the programme content but also conversations between the viewers can have educational value. So as to motivate parents of preschoolers to engage in co-viewing, a running bar was shown on screen. This study investigates which text is most suitable to enhance parent-child interaction.

Anna Mirny
What are the educational needs of preschool children in Russia?
 What do child experts express to be the most important educational needs of children in Russia's fast-changing society? As the adults may themselves struggle with the changes, TV can provide guidelines for preschoolers to develop, e. g. tolerance, ethnic norms, and a healthy lifestyle.

June H. Lee
The educational and cultural impact of *Sisimpur*
 Since 2005, the Bangladeshi *Sesame Street* is broadcast on national TV, and specially equipped rickshaws bring the programme into remote villages. The programme is found to foster basic literacy and mathematical skills.

Cairo Arafat
Shara'a Sinsim-Palestine
 The Palestinian *Sesame Street* has been on air for 8 years now. In addition to the characteristic preschool curriculum, the series helps children deal with their difficult everyday life with pro-social messages.

Andrea Holler
"SpongeBob makes himself and the children laugh"
 Although it was not produced for this target group, 3- to 6-year-olds already love the series *SpongeBob SquarePants* because of its character construction and the perspectives and experiences that are so typical for children.

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