

Little Princess plush toy: appeals to everybody

Little Princess, the protagonist of Tony Ross's successful children's books, has been adapted for TV. In the show Little Princess experiences adventures in her everyday life, which for example revolve around tidying up or brushing her hair. The show, which is co-produced by ZDF tivi, ZDF Enterprises (Germany) and Illuminated Film Ltd. London (United Kingdom), has got 74.5 % market shares with the 3- to 5-year-olds in Germany. The movie rating board Wiesbaden has even awarded the show the seal of approval "Highly Recommended". Little Princess also enjoys great popularity on the licence market (TV-Loonland): there are toys and plush dolls, educational games and kid's vehicles, and activity, audio and songbooks on the market.

For a study 53 kindergartners, 45 TV experts working at public broadcasting stations, and 29 educators evaluated 12 licensed plush toys. They chose their favourite and least favourite toy.

The TV experts' comments



From an expert's point of view, the little plush princess is evaluated exclusively positive. The likeable appearance and the pleasant, soft feel of the plush toy are emphasised, as well as the similarity to the original TV character. Some of the TV experts even found the toy more appealing than the actual character from the show.

"Small child pattern: round face, friendly expression, soft body – soft, cute, baby-like... You want to cuddle with it, it feels good." (female TV expert)

"Toy character, good friend, who I want to tell things to, she listens to me, I like her, because she's always friendly." (male TV expert)

"Is very close to the animated character." (female TV expert)

"The small, knobby nose, the long nightgown and the cute smile. And the way she holds her hands. Funny how the hair comes out of the crown." (female TV expert)



The children's comments

Especially with girls, the little princess is well received, in some cases also with boys. According to the children's statements during the interview this can be traced back to the broadcast of the show during the enquiry period. One boy evaluated the toy negatively. He did not like the princess's "spaghetti-hair".

"Because she's got brown hair, they look pretty, and she's wearing a dress." (girl, 4 years old)

"Because she's got a crown and I have one, too." (boy, 5 years old)

"I always watch her at home in the evening, she's exactly the same." (girl, 4 years old)

"She's got a crown with nibs, the dress is soft and white like Paula [her favourite stuffed animal], you can wash her in a small tub, but you cannot iron her." (girl, 4 years old)



The educators' comments

Educators do not rate the princess as too recommendable and she has only once been chosen for 1st place. Main points of criticism were the material and the appearance of the plush toy.

"It rather looks like a doll."

"I don't like the proportions, the expression, the mouth – especially those staring eyes."

"She may have a friendly gaze, but she doesn't seem great for cuddling."

"Very simple, very few colours. Very cuddly."

Little Princess: TV-character (top), Little Princess as 35 cm plush toy (middle), interview situation at the kindergarten (bottom)

Andrea Holler/Birgit Kinateder (IZI)

Source: Study "Gefährten der Kindheit" ["Childhood companions"] (Cooperative study IZI/Foundation "Chancen für Kinder durch Spielen")