

# Patterns of YouTube viewing among Israeli toddlers

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# Scientific Background

- Television is no longer the primary screen choice of the very young
- YouTube has emerged as alternative to traditional children's television
- YouTube offers diverse content possibilities for children

# Why YouTube?

- It offers diverse content possibilities for children
- It permits easy access to favorite TV programs that can be watched again and again
- It frees viewers from dependence on television programming schedules
- It broadcasts new formats for children's entertainment

# What young children watch on YouTube?

- TV programs they prefer
- Real life activities; unboxing videos; challenges videos; morning routines ; silly skits
- A prime example is “Kinder Surprise Eggs”

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# NEW Huge 101 Surprise Egg Opening Kinder Surprise Elmo Disney Pixar Cars Mickey Minnie Mouse



Baby Big Mouth

 **Subscribe** 4,691,744

422,335,924 views

# YouTube drawbacks as a source of entertainment for the very young

- YouTube lacks professional selection
- YouTube is overloaded with displays and commercial content (even “YouTube Kids”)
- No research has yet focused specifically on toddlers use of YouTube

# The present study

- What are the general patterns of toddlers' YouTube viewing?
- How does YouTube viewing correlate with children's age, gender, presence of older siblings and overall screen viewing time?
- What are parents' attitudes and preferences towards their children's YouTube viewing?
- What are parents' objectives for choosing YouTube for their children's viewing?

# Demographics

- 289 parents of toddlers aged 18–36 months
- The average age of the children was 25.8 months (SD 6.8), 48% were girls
- 85% were mothers
- 72% had a full-time job and 22% worked part-time



# The main variables analyzed

1. YouTube viewing, measured by a dichotomous question “Does your child watch YouTube regularly, at least several times a week” (1=yes, 0=no)
2. The tendency to replace TV with YouTube (1=replaces totally; 2= replaces partially; 3=YouTube viewing supplements TV, but doesn’t replace it)

# Findings

**RQ1: What are the general patterns of toddlers' YouTube viewing?**

- 46.7% watch YouTube regularly
- The viewing begins during the first year of life, and by 24 months 92% are watching YouTube
- YouTube viewing replaces TV in 24%
- YouTube viewing partly replaces TV in 29%
- YouTube viewing supplements traditional TV viewing in 47%

## **RQ2: How does YouTube viewing correlate with children's age, gender, presence of older siblings and overall screen viewing time**

- Older children have a stronger tendency for regular YouTube viewing
- Among younger children YouTube supplements “traditional” TV viewing, whereby as children become older it replaces TV
- Children who are regular YouTube viewers watch more (168 / 112 min.)

### **RQ3: What are parents' attitudes and preferences towards their children's YouTube viewing?**

- Most parents (81%) prefer that their children watch screen content on children's television channels
- Parents are more willing to watch children's programs together with their children on TV
- There was a positive correlation between co-viewing of YouTube and co-viewing of TV
- Parents who allow their children to watch YouTube regularly tend to be more satisfied and more trustful with child-oriented programs

## RQ4: What are parents' objectives for choosing YouTube for their children's viewing?

There were three reasons for searching child-oriented content in YouTube:

1. "looking for programs that my child likes to watch on TV" (0.240, 0.003)
2. "looking for content with familiar actors/protagonists" (0.155, 0.012)
3. "looking for content that would amuse my child" (0.289, 0.001).

## RQ4: What are parents' objectives for choosing YouTube for their children's viewing?

Parents of children who are YouTube viewers tend to use screen media

1. as a calming device (0.170, 0.006)
2. as a reward for desirable behavior (0.140, 0.027)
3. as a means to keep the child busy (0.172, 0.04)
4. during trips (0.183, 0.003)
5. while waiting in public places (0.217, 0.001)

# Conclusions

- YouTube watching starts in very young ages
- Older children watch more YouTube (probably because of improved motor and cognitive skills and preferences for specific programs), which might be more available on YouTube.
- Toddlers who watch YouTube regularly can be characterized as “heavy” media consumers.

# Conclusions

- Parents' lack of enthusiasm for YouTube as an alternative viewing platform for their children because it forces them to be more involved in the viewing



# Parents are using YouTube:

1. As an extension of content available on children's television channels
2. For instrumental reasons stemming from their parenting needs
3. Have not yet discovered developmental and enrichment potential of YouTube