

# Understanding the Media Landscape Surrounding Children

## – A Survey of current status and Issues –

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### 1. Introduction

In recent years, the expansion of ICT has increased the use of media devices in education sites. Early childhood stage has not been an exception, with the help of media tools such as smartphones and tablets at home. It is expected that the increased use of these media tools during the pandemic has brought an impact and changed children's behavior.

Therefore, it has become a challenge for childcare providers to consider how to support children in the early childhood stage by utilizing these tools.

### 2. Background

The pandemic has changed our lifestyles, which also impacted and changed the environment surrounding the children. One of these changes was the use of media from early childhood. Online learning apps, games, drawing tools, video and music content become easier for children to access through media devices. As these media will become a more accessible tools for children, we need to care how we can use these tools in a better way.

### 3. Objective

In this study, we will reveal what changes and effects media made on children over the pandemic a survey of childcare facilities to discuss on how we can utilize the media.

### 4. Methods

Survey Target: Caregivers from 616 childcare facilities located in S city.

Survey Period: August 24 to September 6, 2023

Survey Questions and Methods:

Online survey on how interaction with children changed before and after the pandemic, children's internal and external change, how media tools were used during the pandemic, and how it's planned to be used from now on. The survey was conducted online using a questionnaire form with multiple-choice answers and free text columns. Respondents agreed to answer the survey voluntarily and that the results will be used only for this study and will not be personally identified.

### 5. Results

We received answers from 145 caregivers from 616 childcare facilities.

The survey was structured into three sections, "Changes in children's behaviour" "How media is utilized" "Future plans of utilizing media" with both multiple-choice answers, and free text answers.

#### 1. Changes in children's behaviour

For the question asking if they noticed any change in the children's behaviour, 12 answered "Very much", 52 answered "Fairly much," 65 answered "Not so much", 8 answered "No changes noticed", and 8 answered

"Others". The biggest change noticed was "Changes in the way they play".

The biggest change internally was "Communication skills", while the biggest change externally was "Change in the way they eat".

## 2. How media is utilized

Regarding how media was used, 35% of the respondents answered that they are "Often" or "Fairly often" utilizing media tools. In comparison, 64% answered "Not often" or "Not utilizing at all".

The survey showed that over 60% of childcare facilities hesitate to implement these technologies.

The most used media devices by order were tablets, PCs, smartphones, and video cameras. DVD/CDs, YouTube, music distribution apps, and TV programs were the most used media content.

## 3. Future plans of utilizing media

Regarding the question "Future plans of utilizing media", 35% responded "Want to utilize it", 46% responded "No plans at this point", 18% answered "Not planning to use it", and 1% answered "Others".

The total of respondents answering if they have any concerns about using the media, respondents answering either "Very concerned" or "Somewhat concerned" reached 68%, indicating that nearly 70% are concerned about media use. The respondents who answered "No concern" were 28%.

## 6. Discussion

Through the changes before and after the pandemic, the caregivers felt the most noticeable change was how the children ate their meals. The descriptions shared in detail "Poor manner and bad posture during mealtime", "Leave seats during mealtime", "Not yet able to use eating utensils properly", and "Decrease in chewing ability", which can be considered that the children's eating habits at home and restrictions and rules for "Silent eating policy" at childcare facilities during the pandemic has affected the children's eating behaviour.

Additionally, from the comments "Fewer opportunities in real-life experiences", "Impact in growth", and "Addiction to video content", we can see the caregivers who try to focus on preschool life to value children's independence through activities and interactions with others through real-life experiences, conflicting to find a solution to adapt with the current increase in media use volume at each home.

In the accelerating media society, it is necessary to consider and propose how to enrich the real-life experience for infants and toddlers through their five senses, utilize media to guarantee childcare quality and implement No-Media time in cooperation with their families.

## 7. Conclusions

With the GIGA school concept fully implemented in 2020, school education aims to enhance learning activities using ICT, and childcare facilities play a big role in caring for the growth of infants and toddlers.

It is questioned how to improve childcare quality by enriching real-life experiences and interactions with others before the children enter primary school and increasing the quality of nursing by interacting with the media effectively.

We want to further analyze and investigate the real-life experiences and communication skills of early elementary school children who entered school after the pandemic.

## < Reference >

Benesse Corporation Benesse Education Research Institute (2021), "Preliminary Report of Survey on Media Use by Parents and Children from Early Childhood to Early Elementary School Age"