



Tumultuous Times: Natural disasters, media & children's fears

As the anniversaries of the 2011 natural disasters approached small screen asked author Toni Deer to report on her relevant recent research at the University of South Australia.

With the arrival of 2011 came a number of terrifying natural disasters affecting parts of Australia and locations within the wider Asia Pacific region:

- Queensland floods
- Cyclone Yasi
- Earthquake, Christchurch New Zealand
- Earthquake, tsunami and threat of nuclear meltdown, Japan

Given that children have easy access to the media in contemporary society it is of great concern that live coverage of these disastrous events showed fearful, distressed and injured people and animals in and amongst fire, debris and flooding. Young children are particularly vulnerable to visual imagery because they rely upon concrete experiences to make meaning. It is becoming increasingly difficult for adults to monitor the visual based media that children are witnessing because of the plentiful sources of media available to children in the home and wider community (e.g. smart phones, television, internet, satellite 24 hour news channels and news broadcasts via televisions in restaurants, pharmacies and shopping centres)

A study was conducted with five to seven year old children to investigate the potential impact that the recent media exposure of the natural disasters has had upon their fears. Findings showed that out of the top eight phenomena categorised by the children as being 'very scary' seven were disastrous events and all four natural disasters recently televised were featured. The earthquake ranked second, the tsunami ranked fifth, the cyclone ranked seventh and the flood ranked eighth most frightening. The nuclear bomb was deemed the most frightening phenomenon and it is possible that this reaction by the children could have resulted from televised coverage of the Japanese tsunami and nuclear meltdown. News footage showed nuclear symbols and nuclear explosions as well as live crosses to the power plant.

Although children were significantly frightened of recently telecast natural disasters as well as other disastrous phenomena (e.g. plane crash, nuclear bomb, bushfire) these fears were only reported when children were reminded of the event through picture card representation and not when children were asked to recall fears. This suggests that, although children find natural disaster phenomena to which they have been exposed through media coverage particularly frightening, these fears lie within the deeper recesses of a child's mind and are not easily expressed unless re-exposure to the imagery/event occurs. Because these fears could surface unpredictably and possess a greater intensity than normal childhood fears it is imperative that adults engage children in conversation about media content to assist children's to cope with these fears.

Given that this study yielded clear evidence that young children are affected by media coverage of natural disasters and that these fears are more intense in young children than other childhood fears, parent and teacher education on the effect of media coverage of natural disasters on children's fears needs to be developed. It is recommended that screening of disaster footage is monitored with warnings in place before live reports are telecast, especially during hours of children's scheduled programming. A balance needs to be addressed between the urgency of relaying the news event to the public and being aware of the child audience that could be witness to imagery that is overtly graphic, violent and frightening in nature.

To further assist children's wellbeing and lifelong healthy development future studies should be conducted to explore how

Continued on P2

Energy drinks bad for kids

An increase in reports of caffeine poisoning in young people has led to calls for health warnings on energy drinks and concerns about their marketing.

Over the past 10 years, the consumption of caffeinated beverages intended to "energise" has increased significantly. In 2009, the energy drink industry spent nearly \$15 million on marketing alone in Australia. Manufacturers pitch their product to athletes, students and people in professions that require sustained alertness. The target population for these types of drinks clearly includes adolescents, and younger children are also likely to be attracted.

A study published recently in the *Medical Journal of Australia* found that callers to the New South Wales Poisons Information Centre reported 297 exposures to energy drinks, over a seven year period with an increasing annual trend from 12 reports in 2004 to 65 in 2010. Symptoms included palpitations, agitation, tremor and gastrointestinal upsets. In 21 subjects, signs of serious cardiac or neurological toxicity, including hallucinations, seizures, arrhythmias or cardiac ischaemia occurred

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/196_01_160112/gun10838_fm.html

A clinical report issued in May 2011 by the *American Academy of Pediatrics* (AAP) offered guidelines for use of energy drinks and sports drinks by children and adolescents. They state that energy drinks should never be consumed by children or adolescents.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/05/25/peds.2011-0965.full.pdf>

The corporate takeover of childhood: who's paying the price? The 3rd Australian Conference on Children and the Media

Friday 9 March 2012, 9am - 5pm
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242 Exhibition Street (cnr Lonsdale St), MELBOURNE

www.childrenandmedia.org.au

NATURAL DISASTERS, MEDIA
& CHILDREN'S FEARS

ENERGY DRINKS BAD FOR KIDS

EDITORIAL: UK ACTS TO REDUCE
EXPOSURE TO SEXUALISING MATERIAL

NEW ROUTINES FOR A NEW TEAR

CHANGES AT ACMA



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EDITORIAL

UK acts to reduce exposure to sexualizing material

In April 2011, the Bailey report on the sexualisation and commercialisation of children was released. The report was the outcome of concerns expressed by the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, over some years.

In quick time, the UK Government set about implementing the recommendations of the report. It established Parent Port (a website to provide parents with easy access to avenues for complaint about media and marketing practices), OFCOM has called on networks to reduce the screening of music videos in family viewing time, and the PM called the industry together to discuss the issues and how to reduce harm.

In December Cameron released a statement of his expectations. In a letter to industry, Children's Minister Sarah Teather said firms must "demonstrate the real difference they are making for families. The prime minister and I will expect to see concrete progress and for this to feel real and meaningful to parents and children."

According to Huffington Post UK, the expectations include:

- Children under the age of 16 must not be used as "brand ambassadors" or in "peer to peer" marketing campaigns.
- A nationwide ban on outdoor advertising that uses "sexualised images". Ministers are keen to extend the existing voluntary arrangements.
- So-called "lads' magazines" and other publications with sexualised images on their covers must not be in easy view of children in shops. A code of practice already exists for newsagents and retailers. "However, application of the code is very patchy and there are many shops.....where these magazines and newspapers are very clearly visible to children," Teather said. "We expect to see a great deal of progress on this issue."

Tumultuous times continued from P1

adults (e.g. parents, educators) talk with children about potentially frightening phenomena they see through media exposure and how they assist children in managing their emotions when they encounter fearful feelings.

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Muris, P, Steerneman, P, Merckelbach, H, & Meesters, C. (1996). The role of parental fearfulness and modelling in children's fear. *Behaviour, Research and Therapy*, 34(10), 929-937.

• Age ratings for music videos could be introduced as a result of a Department for Culture, Media and Sport consultation.

• An education programme to promote awareness of advertising techniques among parents.



Barbara Biggins
OAM
Hon CEO

Cameron will meet the industry again in December 2012.

In stark contrast, Australia has done little to reduce the exposure of the young to material that is likely to sexualise them

The Senate report of 2008 languishes. There has been no 18 month review of the effectiveness of its recommendations (which mostly relied on a self regulatory approach). The Senate Inquiry into the classification of film and TV in Australia which reported in June last year recommended that the Senate act on its 2008 recommendation to review progress achieved from that approach. In between times, Federal MP for Kingston Amanda Rishworth gave a speech on the issue on Feb 2010 expressing her concerns and those of her constituents:

<http://www.rishworth.com.au/a/speeches/Feb%208%202010%20-%20Sexualisation%20of%20Girls%20in%20the%20Media.pdf>

The problems haven't gone away. Where is the Government voice here that insists that something effective be done?

UK coverage of the issues:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/dec/24/sexualised-advertising-children-cameron-crackdown>

<http://www.theweek.co.uk/music/raunch-culture/44064/enough-raunch-joan-bakewell-joins-anti-gaga-lobby>

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2011/12/23/david-cameron-vows-action_n_1168257.html

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West, NT, & Albrecht, K. (2007). Building emotional competence: a strategy for disaster preparation and recovery. *Exchange* 175, 20-25.

Yinjiao, Y. (2011). A meta-analysis of age and gender differences in children's media-induced fright. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, New York.*

Toni Deer
(Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with Honours, University of South Australia)

Mud pies are the healthiest choice

SHERADYN HOLDERHEAD
EDUCATION EDITOR

CHILDREN are being encouraged to get their hands dirty at childcare centres renovated with a nature theme.

In SA, Mission Australia is renovating three failed ABC Learning centres, in Osborne, Redwood Park and Elizabeth Vale, which were known for their carpeted walls and artificial turf playgrounds.

These were replaced with outdoor discovery gardens, wooden play equipment, tunnels and bridges. Each centre also has its own vegetable patch.

POLL
Is muddy play good for children?

24-hour news
adelaide.now.com.au

Mission Australia hopes these will all help to combat "bio-phobia" - a fear of nature's risks.

Its early learning services SA regional manager Laura Francis said a lot of research into early childhood showed the importance of children having access to the outside environment.

"We find, especially in the areas the centres are located, that children have quite limited access to the natural environment and when they do, it's not safe or engaging," she said.

"The centres were quite sterile and now we have made them much more inviting and much more fun."

Child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg said bio-phobia, or nature deficit disorder, was increasingly prevalent.

"What I would argue is this is all an important part of unstructured play and socialisation," he said.

"Children need to get outside and play - depriving them of this can be very serious for their psychological development.

"Plus children need exposure to nature because it helps you build up an immune system and it's ridiculous some parents are obsessed with protecting them from these imagined risks."

Dr Carr-Gregg said this was part of the rising trend of risk-averse parenting.

"Parents believe through the media the world is a big, bad, terrifying place - many won't even let their children walk to school," he said.

The Advertiser, 3 December 2011

Parents have remote control

SUSIE O'BRIEN
CLARE PEDDIE

CHILDREN nationwide are allowed to watch violent, sexual and scary television shows, a study reveals.

Parents worry that television is bad for kids, but many let them watch what they want, according to the latest research report from the Australian Research Alliance on Children and Youth

POLL, TELL US
Do your kids watch violent TV shows?

24-hour news
adelaide.now.com.au

(ARACY). Parents find many children's shows alarming, including *Ben 10*, cartoons and *Funniest Home Videos*.

Of particular concern are programs that are

violent, gendered, sexualised and have advertising targeted at children.

But parents say such content is "difficult to avoid" and only half have rules on what kids can watch - down from 80 per cent 15 years ago.

ARACY focus groups in Victoria and South Australia and a national online survey of 588 parents suggest "children's choices of viewing held

sway much of the time". But parents have some control by taping shows, talking with their kids about shows, monitoring reactions and turning off the TV.

Mother-of-two Lorina Percevault, of Coromandel Valley, has "fairly strict rules". Rose, 4, is a "one-channel girl" (ABC2) while brother Kyan, 7, is old enough to watch ABC3 in another room.

The Advertiser, 7 December 2011

Octonauts, ABC2, 5.30pm

IT'S no news that kids can be as fickle as African dictators, one minute all over Iggle Piggle and his surreal squeaky friends from *In the Night Garden* like a rash and demanding merchandise under threat they make their parents' lives a misery for all eternity, then ditching the customised bed linen, wallpaper and soft furnishings like nuclear waste once the next fad hits. On which note, welcome *Octonauts*, the latest cutely animated anthropomorphic animals to grab the preschoolers by the heart strings. Just for a point of difference, these ones live under water. Parents, get your credit cards ready.

The Age Green Guide, 12 January 2012

How the unborn are being brandwashed

Susie O'Brien

The Advertiser, 14 January 2012

IF YOUR credit card bill is sky-high this month, you're certainly not alone.

But don't feel too bad. It may not be entirely your fault.

Marketing experts estimate that 40 per cent of our purchases are the result of largely subconscious brain activity - and I don't mean shopping while drunk.

Marketing has gone hi-tech and makes the team at *CSI* look like amateurs. No manipulation is out of bounds and half the time we don't even know why we buy the things we do.

The latest frontier is brainwashing - or brandwashing, as it's becoming known - unborn babies.

That's right, babies still in the womb are the newest target market, according to marketing expert Martin Lindstrom in his new book *Brandwashed*.

Lindstrom is a global marketing expert-turned-whistleblower.

As he tells it, marketers came up with the concept of in-vitro targeting after a UK study of women who watched *Neighbours* while pregnant. Re-

searchers found their babies loved hearing the theme song after they had been born.

They had a slower heartbeat and were less agitated when the song was played.

They didn't react to other music in the same way - it was just that one familiar song they had been programmed to like.

And so other unscrupulous marketers set about working out how to get other advertising jingles into the minds of the unborn.

I am not making this up.

If you think about it, it makes sense.

Unborn babies are a largely untapped captive audience and if you get them early enough, they will be loyal customers for life.

Pregnant women, who pass their passion for certain foods on to their unborn child through amniotic fluid, are also being targeted by marketers in a neat two-for-one deal.

It's unscrupulous because this sort of marketing is entirely subconscious.

Unborn babies are being targeted in other ways as well, according to Lindstrom.

A major Asian shopping mall

has already started appealing to pregnant women and their babies by spraying appealing scents (baby powder and cherry-blossom perfume) and playing a cacophony of carefully selected sounds such as soft giggling and nostalgic songs.

Not only have expectant mothers flocked to the centre, but their babies also loved going there because they had been covertly trained to feel comfortable there. It's all such a con.

USUALLY we can combat marketing because we are aware of it and can make a rational decision about whether 50 per cent off washing powder or two-for-one nappies is a good deal.

But in the above cases adults, children and babies are being targeted in ways they aren't even aware of, and thus find it hard to counter.

It's not about to get any easier.

In the UK, a similar level of manipulation is being used in a number of shopping centres to chart the movements of every shopper carrying a smart phone.

The centre managers track how long the phone users stay, what shops they go into and how

they move around the centre. Shoppers don't give their permission and the only way they can opt out is to turn their phone off. The data is then used to tailor the centre to make sure people spend more.

Such stealth tactics are common online, where marketers are tracking our digital footprints.

After doing some extensive searching to contact *The Biggest Loser* trainer Michelle Bridges for a news story recently, I found myself bombarded with ads for her cut-price training sessions while on other websites.

My digital data has been mined to extract personal information that has then been on-sold so other corporations can bombard me with customised advertising.

So where does all this leave the average shopper - apart from broke?

For a start, we do all have to take responsibility for our spending decisions. No marketer can force us to hand over our Eftpos card and punch in our pin but we need to put the brakes on.

In the end it doesn't matter whether our desire to spend is conscious or not - we do all need to curb the urge to splurge.

Body-less models cause alarm

MODELS are keeping their heads but losing their bodies in a disturbing new advertising trend.

European fast-fashion giant H&M has confessed to superimposing models' heads on digitally produced bodies to sell lingerie and swimwear.

"It's not about ideals or to show off a perfect body," H&M spokesman Hakan Andersson told Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*. "We are doing this to show off the garments."

The clothing was photographed on mannequins and the images were then edited using computer software to create more human forms. Real models were photographed separately and their heads were superimposed on the images.

"It's incredibly alarming," said

Dannielle Miller, author of *The Butterfly Effect* and director of Enlighten Education, an empowerment program for teenage girls. "It's symptomatic of a culture that sees real women as immaterial. More than ever, the camera is lying to us."

Miller said computer-generated models could contribute to poor body image.

H&M is a Swedish company with more than 2000 stores and has created clothing collaborations with Kylie Minogue, Madonna and Versace.

Grazia magazine editor Kellie Hush said the retail giant was acting irresponsibly. "It doesn't send a good message," she said.

DAMIEN WOOLNOUGH

The Australian, 7 December 2011

review

Super Mario 3D Land

Nintendo 3DS (\$69.95)

G

★★★★★

THOSE concerned for the Nintendo 3DS console in its floundering first few months should fret no more thanks to Mario, who has come to rescue in not one but two new games this Christmas. One sees the Italian plumber back at his karting best.

The other, *Super Mario 3D Land*, sees Nintendo combining the new with the old by bringing familiar side-scrolling and platforming gameplay into the third dimension and, for the most part, it works a treat.

Compared with the plumber's recent console outings, such as *Mario Galaxy 2*, the levels here are more straightforward. Mario can attack only using jumps or power-ups and he even shrinks when touched by an enemy. It's the most classic-feeling 3D Mario yet - and indeed the best. The level design is tight, with challenges and puzzles that steadily increase as the game progresses.

The power-ups that afford Mario temporary abilities include the return of the Super Mushroom, Fire Flower and the Super Leaf, which activates Tanooki Mario, plus there's a new Boomerang weapon and Propeller Box.

The game is arguably the first 3DS game to use the added depth of 3D as a proper mechanic, rather than just an aesthetic extra.

While the controls feel inaccurate at times, *Super Mario 3D Land* still manages to capture all that is memorable about the series.

MIKE WILCOX

The Age Green Guide, 15 Dec. 2011

Driving is child's play

Toys from the *Cars* franchise are taking iPad games down a new road.

DISNEY has capped off a successful year for the Pixar movie *Cars 2* with the release of a line of plastic toys that interact with an iPad.

Similar in concept to the new Skylanders Spyro's Adventure console game that uses toy figurines, Disney's new collection of *Cars 2* toys is designed to work with the free *Cars 2 Appmates* iPad game.

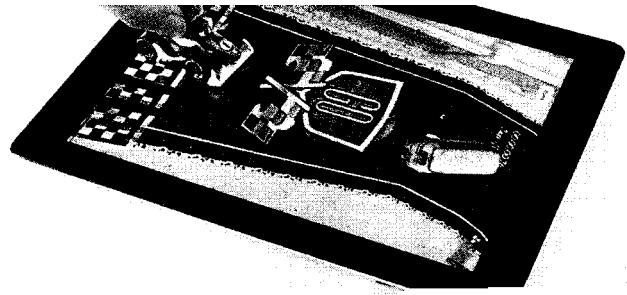
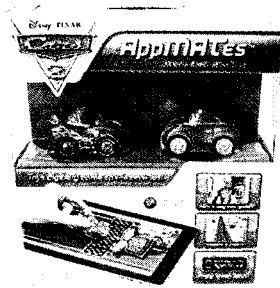
"The game really brings that play pattern of boys playing with toys to life, by giving them familiar characters' names and faces, and then taking it to a whole new level," says Walt Disney Company Australia licensing general manager Kylie Watson-Wheeler.

The game and toys convert the iPad into a virtual play mat that springs to life when a toy car is placed on the display.

This is distinct from other

toys and accessories that have used the iPad as a controller.

To navigate a toy car in the game, players put it in the middle of the iPad screen and, once it is detected, the direction in which the car is pointing controls the movement of the game world, so driving around in the game requires players only to rotate the car on the spot.



The *Cars 2 Appmates* iPad game uses a virtual play mat to enter the world of Radiator Springs.

The open-world-style game-play involves freely exploring the familiar Radiator Springs setting, completing missions and collecting items, as well as customising virtual-vehicle add-ons and taking part in races.

The design of the toy cars, created in partnership with Spin Master, is surprisingly straightforward. It's the innovative engineering that is clever.

Each car has three sensors underneath, forming a triangle that tells the game which direction the car is facing.

Placing two fingers on the car's side windows creates a connection to the sensors underneath, so your fingers are in effect making contact with the iPad's capacitive-touch display.

Another clever piece of design is the use of mirrors inside each car to transfer light

generated by the iPad through the headlights.

Rather than delivering a generic experience, each car unlocks new parts of the game world and gameplay elements and, depending on which car is used, the game narrative changes to the corresponding character's voice.

While the *Cars 2* iPad game can be played with digital versions of the toy cars, which are available as in-apps at prices from 99¢ to \$1.99 each, the full experience is intended to incorporate the Appmate toys, available in packs of two for \$29.95.

The first two packs include the characters Lightning McQueen with Holley Shiftwell and Tow Mater with Finn McMissile. Another pack of two characters from the *Cars* franchise is expected later.

The Age Green Guide, 15 December 2011

Sex, race, and man hugs don't add up

By **CLARE KERMOND**

AS JOHN O'Grady famously observed, "they're a weird mob". When it comes to what riles us, Australians are a fickle bunch. This year we complained in large numbers about an ad showing two gay men chastely hugging, thought an ad showing an Indian door-to-door salesman was racist, but didn't like a Muslim group's billboard slogan, Jesus — A prophet of Islam.

According to the Advertising

Standards Board, the campaign promoting safe sex made it twice into the top 10 most complained about ads for the year, first as a poster and in third place as a billboard. The ad, by the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities, shows two fully clothed men hugging, with the slogan "Rip & Roll" and a picture of a condom.

The Rip & Roll poster, despite receiving 222 complaints, was not found to have breached the advertising code of ethics, with

the board saying it was strongly in favour of the important health message the advertisement portrayed.

The second most complained about ad, for Energy Watch, was withdrawn after it was found to have breached the code of ethics. After receiving 75 complaints the board ruled that a subtle suggestion that the man in the ad may not be completely honest was offensive and vilified Indian people.

Unsurprisingly, sex and nud-

ity were popular reasons for complaint, with a General Pants ad featuring a topless woman coming in sixth and it was withdrawn from circulation, and an ad for The Tool Shop, showing barely dressed women with the tag line "How about all three?", in ninth and also withdrawn.

Board chief executive Fiona Jolly said in 2011 it received complaints about almost 500 ads, of which it determined 57 breached the code of ethics or other initiatives and codes.

The Age, 15 December 2011

Body image muscling in on boyhood

Our kids are picking up on pressure from the media and peers

VERITY EDWARDS

BOYS as young as five are starting to believe that being masculine is all about six-packs, muscles and hairless chests, raising concerns that kids are under too much pressure to conform to body-image stereotypes.

Flinders University sport,

health and physical education professor Murray Drummond is four years into a longitudinal study on boys' attitudes to masculinity, and told *The Australian* it was alarming how early children were thinking about their physical appearance.

"The boys don't even mention masculinity, they wouldn't even know the word," he said. "But what these kids consider to be male is to be muscular, strong. They're starting to realise what a successful body is and it must be muscular and have a six-pack."

Professor Drummond began his study four years ago by interviewing 34 five-year-olds. He has interviewed them each year since and is planning to continue the study into their adolescence.

While it is normal for boys to associate with male pursuits such as racing cars, action heroes and contact sports, Professor Drummond said body image was an increasingly worrying factor.

With the youngest cohorts in his first year of interviews, Professor Drummond asked a series of questions and had them draw

pictures. "I asked them to draw me someone healthy, draw me someone sporty, draw me a man," he said.

"In every one of the pictures they drew me a very muscular man, with a V-shape, or very muscly with barbells." That influence was coming from parents, peers and increasingly from the media, he said, with a greater focus on the chiselled physique.

Professor Drummond said the boys also defined being a man as being able to run faster than or beat girls, which reinforced gen-

der stereotypes from an early age and worked against the notion of equal opportunity and equality.

"If you want these to change you need to start these discussions in the home and at school at an earlier age," he said.

He hoped parents would recognise the growing "subtle undercurrent" of pressure on pre-pubescent boys to be toned or have bulging muscles.

"The majority are not going to end up with eating disorders but a lot of them face body pressures the same as girls."

The Australian, 2 January 2012

Movie ploy to sell Paddle Pops

ICE cream manufacturer Streets is bypassing bans on junk food advertising on children's television by distributing a 90-minute animated feature film based on the Paddle Pop lion character.

The G-Rated DVDs are being distributed for free at Woolworths supermarkets and petrol stations when an ice block is purchased for a child.

The State Government and South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon have expressed concerns about the marketing ploy which bypasses a voluntary ban on junk food advertisements during children's television hours.

A spokeswoman for Health Minister John Hill said he had concerns with the junk food industry turning its attention away from children's television and to other ways of getting advertising in to the family home.

She said the issue would be raised at a summit of health food experts to be held in Adelaide this year.

Senator Xenophon said the use of the lion character was "advertising dressed up as entertainment" and exploitation of a loophole to get around the children's TV ban.

"There is significant research that shows young children are incapable of understanding the motivations behind advertising, and this is just another form of advertising," he said.

"Streets would not be spending money developing this stuff if they didn't think it would lead to sales.

"The Government needs to close



**MILES
KEMP**

down all the loopholes when it comes to advertising to children, whether it is happening on TV, the internet or in these types of products."

Adelaide mother Catherine Henwood said her family tried to practise healthy eating and objected to the Streets DVD ploy.

"I'm one of those frustrated parents who tries to get out of the supermarket checkout without their kids trying to grab everything in front of them," she said.

A spokeswoman for Unilever, owner of Streets which makes Paddle Pops, said parents were asked last year for their views before it was distributed.

She said the DVD did not feature any icecream products and had a healthy outdoor adventure theme.

"The vast majority of mums (more than 85 per cent) felt it was either appropriate or had no concerns about featuring the Paddle Pop Lion in an animated series," the spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman said the Paddle Pop was approved for SA school canteens and was more nutritionally sound than many alternative icecreams.

The Advertiser, 14 January 2012

appfile

SPEAKING as one fairly recently inducted into the hall of doting grandparents, I have found that today's ankle-biters become proficient in the use of an iPad far sooner than they learn the basics of the potty.

This simple and salient fact has generated considerable activity among app developers eager to show parents how educational, entertaining and absorbing their products are. It was a ready-made audience, first honed by books then radio and television. Kids' stuff on those media are

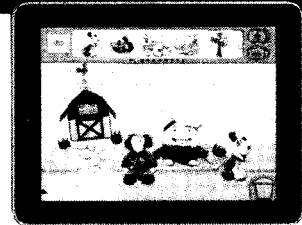
still popular but now, with touch-screen mobile devices, the kids can interact directly with their favourites.

Play School, the children's television program originally based on a BBC production that began in 1964, has been running in Australia for 45 years. Last week it appeared on the iPad as *Play School Art Maker*, as young and sturdy as ever.

It is a free app produced by the ABC that allows the junior generation to create pictures, animated movies and slideshows, add their own audio nar-



ration, upload their own photographs as backgrounds and save their creations for later grandparental admiration. And it includes *Play School's* main characters: Big Ted,



Little Ted, Jemima and Humpty. *Play School Art Maker* is aimed at children from two to six years, does not require an internet connection and is a free download from the iTunes App Store.

The Age Green Guide, 8 December 2011

Disaster scenes strike hidden fear into young

JORDANNA SCHRIEVER
HEALTH REPORTER

REPEATED exposure to disaster footage can deeply affect young children but they may not talk about their fears, a UniSA study has found.

Early childhood research assistant Toni Deer said that when asked about their fears

the children, aged 5-7, listed things such as the dark, ghosts and witches.

But when they were shown images from actual natural disasters - which in some cases had happened a year earlier - four of their top eight fears included the Christchurch earthquake, tsunami, cyclones and floods.

"Although children were significantly frightened of natural disaster phenomena recently telecast as well as other such phenomena - for example plane crash, nuclear bomb, bushfire - these fears were only reported when children were reminded of the event through a picture card representation and not

when children were asked to recall fears," Ms Deer said.

She said this suggested the fears lay within the deeper recesses of a child's mind and were not easily expressed.

"These fears could surface unpredictably and possess a greater intensity than normal childhood fears," she said.

In the study, conducted late

last year, Ms Deer showed 16 disaster images to 22 children and asked them to rate them as very scary, a bit scary or not scary. The study highlighted a need for parents to discuss what was being watched on television with their children, Ms Deer said.

"It might be that they just have questions and want

more information. If you can say to them this is what happens and this is why, it can help them understand what they are seeing."

Australian Council on Children and the Media vice president Glenn Culpit said parents should avoid exposing children to replays of disaster footage.

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