



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

VIOLENT ACTS, MEDIA AND CHILDREN

(25th May 2001)

abstract

The document deals with the issue of violence and the relationship between media and children. The NBC considers the growing influence that traditional media and new media have on the formation of juvenile personality, the opportunities that are created and the related risks that may arise; it notes that current guidelines are insufficient and generally not implemented and intends to draw attention to the importance of the issue in order to contribute to public debate, among those working in this sector, and the categories and associations concerned.

The NBC believes that the principle objective to achieve should be the formation of a culture which respects children, their emotional and formative needs, and the responsibility of adults and institutions towards them. On the basis of this, the document puts forward several bioethical suggestions addressed to the different social figures involved in infant formation. The parents' responsibility in the upbringing of their children also in relation to the use of the mass media is underlined.

As concerns the school sphere, teachers should receive training that ranges from the transformation of the image of infancy during the years to the psychophysical characteristics of children and adolescents, the effect that different audiovisual messages have both in cognitive and emotional terms at different ages, and young people's need to be actively engaged, play, participate and plan. The NBC urges the media to encourage more decisive action regarding the differentiation of children's and adult's programmes and the introduction of stricter regulations inclined to prohibit any form of advertising in programmes for children. As far as political institutions are concerned, the NBC emphasises the need for the diffusion of a correct infancy culture which recognizes children as individuals with their own entitlement and it recommends the practical implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989).