

THE GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE ON GENDER IN MEDIA RELEASES
NEW FINDINGS
MALES OUTNUMBER FEMALES ALMOST 3 TO 1 IN FILMS

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LOS ANGELES, February 7, 2008 – Examining 15,000 individual speaking characters across G-, PG-, PG-13, and R-rated films, research by Dr. Stacy Smith of USC’s Annenberg School for Communication in association with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media indicates that males outnumber females roughly 3 (2.71) to 1 on the silver screen.

Dr. Smith and her team also examined 4000 female film characters and found that two types of females often frequent film: the traditional and the hypersexual. For example, females are over five times as likely as males to be shown in alluring apparel and are roughly three times as likely as males (10.6% vs. 3.4%) to be shown with an unrealistically “ideal” body.

Earlier findings revealed that G-rated television did a better job at including females in its fare than do G-rated films. Nevertheless, Dr. Smith’s research reveals problematic portrayals in television aimed at children. Females in kids’ fare are almost four times as likely as males to be shown in sexy attire (20.7% vs. 5.4%) and nearly twice as likely as males to be shown with a small waist line (25.6% vs. 14.4%). Animated females in TV for kids are more likely to be shown in sexually revealing attire than are live action females (24.5% vs. 17.4%). Also, females in animated TV stories for children are more likely to have small waists (36.9% vs. 6.9%) and have an unrealistic body shape (22.7% vs. 1.2%) than are females in live action TV stories for children. Though, females are not the only ones hypersexualized in TV content for children. Animated males are more likely than live action males to have a large chest (15.4% vs. 4.9%), small waist (18.4% vs. 4.3%), and an unrealistically muscularized physique (12.5% vs. .5%).

This research was announced at a four-day international conference on gender and children in media at the University of Southern California and hosted by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media.

Academy Award-winner Geena Davis, Sony Entertainment Co-Chair Amy Pascal, Philanthropist Wallis Annenberg, ABC Entertainment President Stephen McPherson, Brown Johnson President, Animation, Nickelodeon/MTVN Kids and Family Group, and Tom Lynch were keynote speakers at an exclusive luncheon for more than two hundred executives and producers.

The successful conference also featured two days of international researcher workshops made possible by the Ford Foundation and the Annenberg School of Communication, with over 30 accomplished children's media researchers from around the globe and a panel.

At an Open Forum on January 31, panelists examined the link between media and American public health issues such as low self-esteem and body image, the effects of American media in other countries such as hypersexual American content in an African context, the business of marketing products to young people through the media in the United States and around the world, and how writers and producers can create complex female characters for the children’s market. Among the day’s participants were Geena Davis, the Institute’s founder, Heather Kenyon of the Cartoon Network, Doreen Spicer of the movie “Jump In,” Kaaren Lee Brown of DiC, David Kleeman of American Center for Children and Media, WGA’s Animation Caucus head Craig Miller, Cort Lane of Mattel, and critic Brian Lowry of the TV Guide Channel. Linda Simensky, Senior Director of Children's Programming for PBS, was the Open Forum’s keynote speaker.