

Are We Training Our Children to Kill?

More American politicians and citizens, including President Trump, are calling for the country's leaders and people to consider the effects of media violence on mass shootings in the wake of three recent mass shootings in California and Ohio that left 34 people dead and many more wounded, in the space of only one week.

Thousands of studies have shown that depictions of violence in the mass media can lead to actual violent behavior among consumers of such violence, especially children and teenagers.

Two new double-blind studies, one on movies conducted in 2017 and a follow-up study on video games conducted in 2019, show that watching characters use guns in movies and video games can encourage children to use guns, Dr. Brad Bushman, professor of communications and psychology at The Ohio State University, reported in a recent article in *Psychology Today*.

In the 2017 study, 104 children aged 8-12 were tested in pairs who knew each other. The children were "randomly assigned to watch a 20-minute clip from a PG movie with guns or the same clip with the guns edited out." After watching the clips, the children were able to play for 20 minutes with toys, with a real disabled 9-mm handgun hidden in a cabinet.

Bushman said 72 percent of the children, 75 children, found the handgun.

"Children who watched the movie clip with guns held the handgun longer (53.1 seconds versus 11.1 seconds)," Bushman writes, "and pulled the trigger more times (2.8 times versus times) than those who saw the same movie clip without guns." {eoa}

Sources: Dr. Brad Bushman, *Psychology Today*, 07/31/19, MOVIEGUIDE® and The Trace, 06/19/17.

This article originally appeared on Movieguide®. Find out what God's doing in Hollywood!