

Watching Harry Potter films enhances creativity in children: study

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Parents who feel guilty about letting their young children watch too many fantasy movies on TV can relax.

Researchers from Lancaster University have discovered that youngsters who watch films like Harry Potter improve their [imagination](#) and creativity.

This is the first attempt to study whether there any educational benefits in exposing children to magical content like witches and wizards, [Santa Claus](#), the Easter bunny and the tooth fairy.

Watching Harry Potter [films](#) could make young children more creative, say researchers at Lancaster University in the UK.

The study examined if there was a link between magical thinking and creativity in [preschool children](#) – and it found that there was.

The small-scale study involved 52 four to six-year-old children. The [youngsters](#) were split into two groups and shown two 15-minute clips from [Harry Potter](#) And The Philosopher's Stone.

The findings show that after watching the clips, the group who watched the magical scenes in general scored "significantly better" in all three areas than their peers in the other group who watches scenes without any magical content.

Researchers Dr Eugene Subbotsky, Claire Hysted and Nicola Jones from the Department of Psychology at Lancaster University concluded that:

“Magical thinking enables children to create fantastic imaginary worlds, and in this way enhances children’s capacity to view the world and act upon it from multiple perspectives. The results suggested that books and videos about magic might serve to expand children’s imagination and help them to think more creatively.”

Magical thinking involves believing in supernatural events like animals speaking human languages, or a witch flying on a broomstick. This involves the ability to construct an alternative world and research has shown that most 4 to 6 year olds think magically in everyday life.

Some of the scenes includes animals talking and witches and wizards performing spells and using wands, while other scenes featured the same characters but without any magical content.

The children were then tested for creativity which included being asked to pretend they were a rabbit or driving a car. They were also asked to think of different ways of putting plastic cups in a bin and for alternative uses for the cup.

The children who had watched the magical scenes performed significantly better on the [creativity](#) tests.

The researchers concluded that rather than just being used for entertainment, “magical thinking can be viewed as an additional source of development of imagination and divergent thinking in children.”

More information: *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 2010, 111, 261-277.
WATCHING FILMS WITH MAGICAL CONTENT FACILITATES CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN, Eugene Subbotsky, Claire Hysted, and

Nicola Jones, Lancaster University, Psychology Department, UK,
[www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/subbotsk/Creativity
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Provided by Lancaster University

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