

Parental Perceptions of Key Influences in Children's Lives

Advertising Education Forum
Research Summary

May 2000

Questions we wanted the research to answer

- What do parents see as the important influences in their children's development?
- Is TV advertising seen by parents as having a major influence with children? If so, what do parents think of it?

Research Methodology

- Face to face and telephone interviews with c300 parents of children aged 12 or under in each of 20 European markets (4,855 interviews in total).
- The sample was nationally representative in terms of age, class and sex.
- Fieldwork timing - December 99 - selected to represent the heaviest period of advertising aimed at children.
- Conducted by GFK, a leading independent research agency via its offices in each of the markets.

Questionnaire

Q1: *Thinking about the different influences in your child's life, what are the 5 most important influences in their up-bringing? (spontaneous responses)*

Q2: *Apart from parental influences how important would you rate the following influences in your child's development? (prompted responses; high, medium, low influence)*

Q3: *Thinking about the influence of (INSERT EACH OF THE INFLUENCES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 1), are you happy with the level of influence this has in your child's up-bringing - in your opinion, should it stay the same, increase or decrease?*

IF TV ADVERTISING IS MENTIONED AS INFLUENCE (QUESTION 1) THAT SHOULD DECREASE (QUESTION 3), ASK QUESTION 4a & QUESTION 4b:

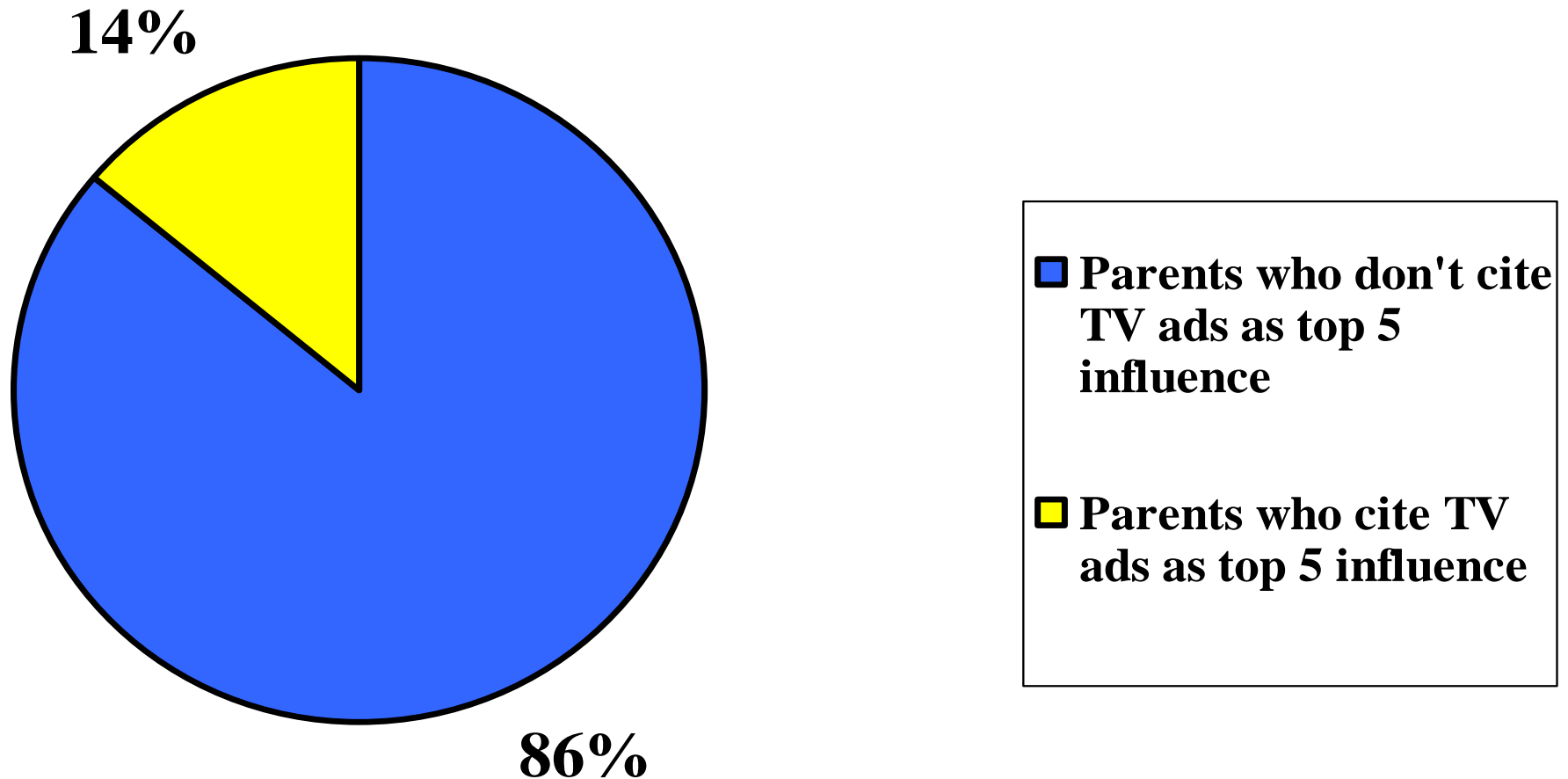
Q 4a: *What is it about TV advertising that you believe should be decreased as an influence in your child's life?*

Q4b: *What sort of TV advertising is more or less positive or negative as an influence in your child's life? Please rate each as positive, neutral or negative
What is it about (INSERT NEXT SORT OF TV ADVERTISING MENTIONED AS NEGATIVE IN Q4b) that makes you say that you are negative towards it?*

Research Findings

*Q1. Thinking about the different influences in your child's life, what are the 5 most important influences in their up-bringing?
(spontaneous responses)*

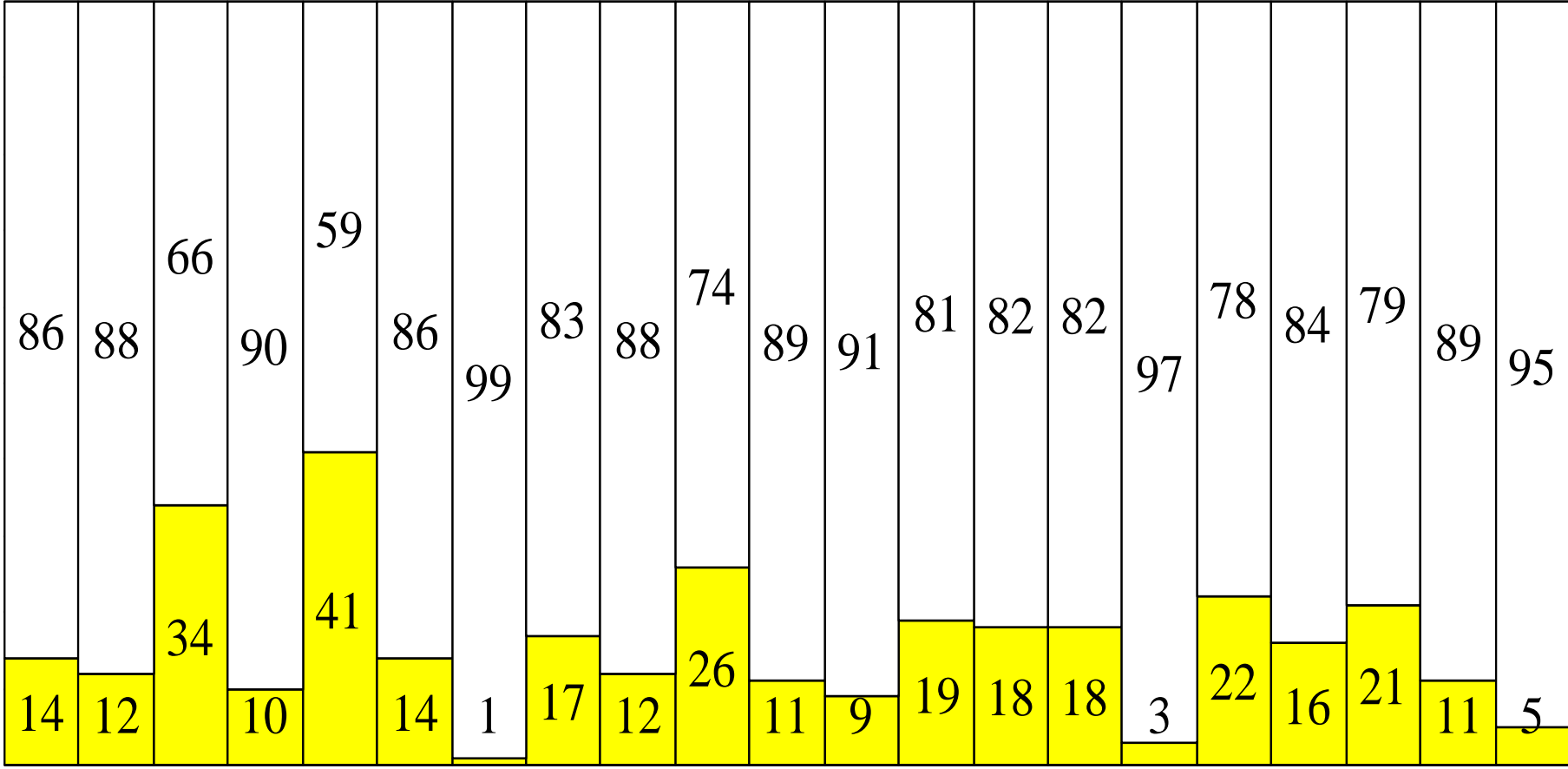
Across Europe, TV advertising is not generally seen by parents as a strong influence in their children's lives



Base: All markets

GFK Q.1 Spontaneous unprompted responses

The perceived level of influence for TV Advertising is generally low



European Mean Aus Bel Cez Den Est Fin Fra Ger Gre Hun Irl Ita Lux Net Pol Por Rom Spa Swe UK

Cite TV ads as Top 5 influence
 Don't Cite TV ads as Top 5 influence

Source: GFK Q1 Spontaneous unprompted responses

What do parents see as important influences in their children's development?

There is a high degree of commonality between the markets in definition of the high influence areas: family, school, friends, TV programmes

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
All markets mean	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
AUS	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
BEL	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	TV ads
CZ	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Other TV
DK	Parents	School	Kids friends	TV ads	Other family
EST	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
FIN	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
FRA	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
GER	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Other TV prog
GRE	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Other TV prog
HUN	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Other TV prog
IRE	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
ITA	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
LUX	Parents	School	Other family	Kids friends	Kids TV prog
NETH	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
POL	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
POR	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
ROM	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
SPA	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog
SWE	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Other TV prog
UK	Parents	School	Kids friends	Other family	Kids TV prog

Source: GFK Q1 spontaneous unprompted responses

**Where does TV advertising rank in
parents' perception compared to
other influences?**

In the context of the other influences, parents see TV advertising as a medium level influence

All markets mean % (weighted by size of population)

1. Parental influences	84	High Influences
2. School, teachers	68	
3. Child's friends, peers	51	
4. Other family members e.g. grandparents	43	

5. Children's TV programmes	23	Medium Influences
6. Other TV programmes	14	
7. TV advertising	14	
8. Children's books, magazines, comics	11	
9. Other care providers, neighbours	11	

10. Sport, sport stars	9	Low Influences
11. Activities outside the home e.g. music	9	
12. Church	7	
13. Cinema films, videos	7	
14. Internet, computer games	5	
15. Children's organisations e.g. scouts	5	
16. Radio, pop music, pop	2	
17. Fashion	1	
18. Displays in shops	1	

Source: GFK Q1 Spontaneous unprompted responses

TV advertising ranks as an influence outside the top 5 in most markets

<u>Market</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
All markets mean	14	No.7
AUS	12	no.8
BEL	34	no.5
CEZ	10	no.8
DEN	41	no.4
EST	14	no.9
FIN	1	no.12
FRA	17	no.8
GER	12	no.8
GRE	26	no.6
HUN	11	no.7
IRE	9	no.7
ITA	19	no.6
LUX	18	no.6
NETH	18	no.6
POL	3	no.11
POR	22	no.7
ROM	16	no.9
SPA	21	no.6
SWE	11	No.10
UK	5	No.12

Source: GFK Q1. Spontaneous unprompted responses

To double-check parents' views on TV advertising and in addition to the spontaneous question, we also asked a question prompting TV advertising as an influence

***Q2. Apart from parental influences, how important would you rate the following influences in your child's development?
(prompted responses; high, medium, low influence)***

At a prompted level, TV advertising is only rated as high by a third of parents and is still only the no.7

All markets mean % (weighted by size of market)

	prompted %		
	high influence	medium	low
1. Parental influences	na	na	na
2. School, teachers	58	27	14
3. Other family members / Other carers	47	32	21
4. Child's friends, peers	44	34	21
5. Children's TV programmes	37	41	21
6. Children's books, magazines, comics	34	40	25
7. TV advertising	34	36	29
8. Internet, computer games	29	30	38
9. Radio, pop music, pop	28	42	29
10. Sports stars	28	36	34
11. Displays in shops	26	35	38
12. Cinema films, videos	24	43	32
13. Other TV programmes	19	39	41

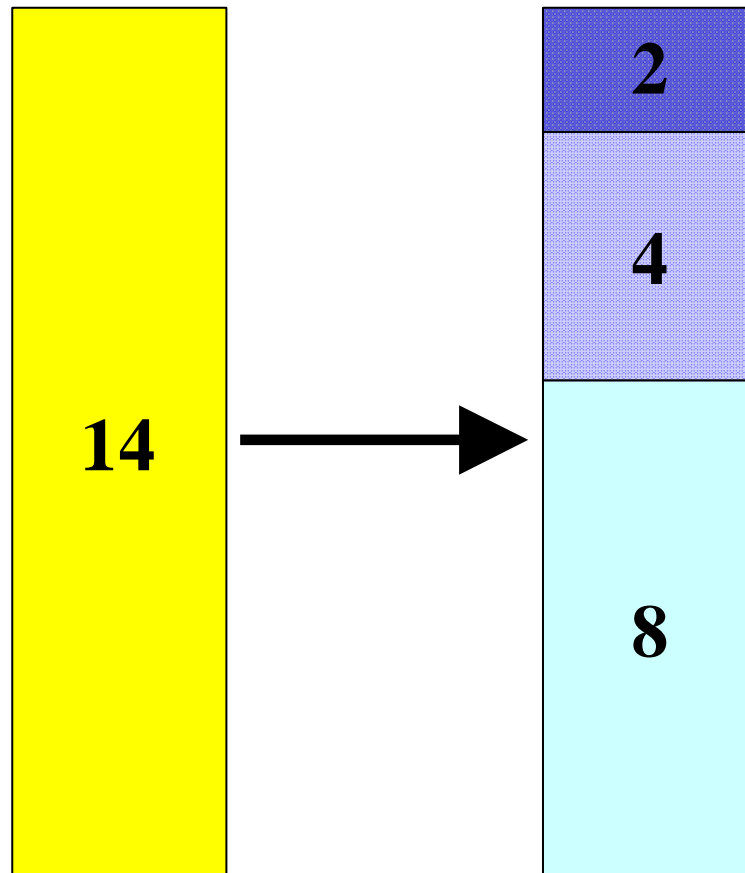
The Perceived Influence of TV Advertising

- **TV Advertising is spontaneously perceived to be a top 5 influence by a minority (14%) of parents across the European markets in the study.**
- **In the majority of markets, TV Advertising is a middle to low ranking influence; the exceptions are Denmark and Belgium, where it is in the top 5 influences.**
- **Within the total sample, although the majority did not see TV advertising as an important influence, there is a high degree of variance in the level of importance parents give to this factor. In Finland, it was 1%, vs 41% in Denmark - parents across Europe do not all have the same point of view on TV advertising.**
- **When prompted as a possible influence, TV advertising remains a middle-ranking influence, behind home, family, friends, TV programmes and books.**

**What attitudes do parents have
towards TV advertising as an
influence in their children's
development?**

Q3. Thinking about the influence of (INSERT EACH OF THE INFLUENCES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 1), are you happy with the level of influence this has in your child's up-bringing - in your opinion, should it stay the same, increase or decrease?

Not all parents who see TV as a top 5 influence want it to decrease



- See TV ads as top 5 influence and want it to increase
- See TV ads as top 5 influence and want it to stay the same
- See TV ads as top 5 influence and want it to decrease
- See TV ads as top 5 influence

% of all parents, all markets

TV Advertising is an issue with a serious level of concern for parents in Denmark and Belgium; it is at a secondary level of concern in Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

	%
All markets mean	8
AUS	9
BEL	25
CZ	3
DK	30
EST	11
FIN	0
FRA	0
GER	8
<u>GRE</u>	<u>16</u>
HUN	7
IRE	7
<u>ITA</u>	<u>15</u>
LUX	11
<u>NETH</u>	<u>15</u>
POL	3
<u>POR</u>	<u>14</u>
ROM	9
<u>SPA</u>	<u>18</u>
SWE	8
UK	3

This % = the number of parents who considered that TV ads were a top 5 influence (spontaneously) and thought this influence should decrease, expressed as a % of the total sample in each market.

Do parents' attitudes towards TV advertising vary by ad category?

***Q4b. What sort of TV advertising is more or less positive or negative as an influence in your child's life?
Please rate each as positive, neutral or negative***

Ads for Toys are the most negatively perceived (nb time of fieldwork) followed by Chocolate/sweets, savoury snacks, soft drinks and films / videos

All markets mean	Food %	Toys %	Savoury Snacks %	Soft drinks %	Choc / sweets %	Films / videos %
Positive	23	15	11	15	18	16
Neutral	59	31	46	45	35	49
Negative	17	54	43	40	47	34
Balance	+6	-39	-32	-25	-29	-18

Base: Those who cited TV ads as top 5 influence which they wanted to decrease : 8% of total sample (491)

Source: GFK Q4

Ads for toys lead the negative perceptions

Negative attitude %	Food %	Toys %	Savoury Snacks %	Soft Drinks %	Chocolate / Sweets %	Films / Videos %
All markets mean (491)	17	54	43	40	47	34
A (12)	19	65	73	74	62	50
B (55)	18	64	49	47	44	27
CZ (9)	44	11	22	22	56	1
DK (61)	32	62	41	58	50	24
EST (36)	25	42	56	58	47	42
FIN (0)	-	-	-	-	-	-
FRA (1)	-	100	-	-	-	-
GER (21)	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRE (40)	17	63	45	55	67	19
H (23)	30	30	35	39	35	44
IRL (20)	15	80	30	45	70	40
I (37)	20	47	26	28	27	15
LUX (15)	47	53	60	-	33	27
NL (37)	7	38	23	21	59	16
POL (8)	25	63	63	50	75	50
P (28)	18	72	46	12	39	27
R (29)	10	28	38	14	21	83
SP (34)	16	56	38	58	51	67
S (17)	18	65	65	71	71	35
UK (9)	12	58	26	26	45	11

Base: Those who cited TV ads as top 5 influence which they wanted to decrease (8% of total)

What is it about TV advertising that makes it a negative influence for some parents?

Q4a. What is it about TV advertising that you believe should be decreased as an influence in your child's life?

Parents who want the influence of TV ads to decrease dislike it because of their perception of frequency, materialism and manipulation of TV ads

	All markets mean %
Ad frequency	13
Promotes materialism	11
Manipulates kids	9
Give wrong messages	5
Unrealistic	5
Misleading	5
False / inaccurate	4
Models too perfect	4
Makes kids want junk	3
Bombarding with too much choice	3
Should advertise educational things	3
Too many expensive things	3
Unnecessary / superfluous	3
Target kids with hidden messages	3

Base: those who see TV ads as important influence and want it to decrease - 8% of total sample (491)

Depth of anti-TV ad feelings can be quite marked in markets where there is a serious or secondary level of anti-TV opinion

%	All Mean	B (55)	DK (61)	GR (40)	IT (37)	SP (34)
Ad Frequency	13		3	56	9	11
Promotes materialism	11	4	13	4	7	20
Manipulates kids	9		20	22	6	3
Give wrong impression	5	15		7	6	6
Unrealistic	5	6	15	3	6	9
Misleading	5	6	9	2	10	6
False / inaccurate	4		2		10	3
Models too perfect	4	4			15	
Makes kids want junk	3	2	5		3	3
Bombard with too much choice	3		10	3		
Should advertise educational things	3	2			7	5
Too many expensive things	3					
Unnecessary	3		4	4		
Target kids with hidden messages	3	2	1			3

Base: those seeing TV ads as having high influence that should decrease - 8% of total sample (491)

Parents' Attitudes to TV Advertising and its influence on children

- **Of the 14% who saw TV advertising as a top 5 influence, around half (8%) would like to see this influence decrease.**
- **Advertising across most major Child-focused product areas receives the disapproval of parents who see TV ads as a negative influence.**
- **Perception of TV advertising as a negative influence on kids is relatively low concern overall.**
- **The reasons parents gave for wanting the influence of TV advertising to decrease were frequency, promoting materialism and a fear of manipulation.**

The Perceived Influence of TV Advertising

- **TV Advertising is spontaneously perceived to be a top 5 influence by a minority (14%) of parents across the European markets in the study.**
- **In the majority of markets, TV Advertising is a middle to low ranking influence; the exceptions are Denmark and Belgium, where it is in the top 5 influences.**
- **Within the total sample, although the majority did not see TV advertising as an important influence, there is a high degree of variance in the level of importance parents give to this factor. In Finland, it was 1%, vs 41% in Denmark - parents across Europe do not all have the same point of view on TV advertising.**
- **When prompted as a possible influence, TV advertising remains a middle-ranking influence, behind home, family, friends, TV programmes and books.**

APPENDIX

Methodology Details (1)

Country	Methodology	Sample	Fieldwork period
Belgium	Telephone Omnibus	220	01.12. - 08.12.99
Denmark	Telephone Omnibus	205	06.12. - 18.12.99
Estonia	Face-to-Face Omnibus	341	08.12. - 22.12.99
Finland	Telephone Omnibus	112	07.12. - 11.12.99
France	Telephone Omnibus	260	03.12. - 04.12.99 17.12. - 18.12.99
Germany	Telephone Omnibus	257	06.12. - 10.12.99
Greece	Face-to-Face Omnibus	416	05.12. - 20.12.99
Netherlands	Telephone Omnibus	242	06.12. - 18.12.99
Ireland	Face-to-Face Omnibus	300	14.01. - 24.01.99
Italy	Telephone Omnibus	241	09.12. - 12.12.99

Methodology Details (2)

Country	Methodology	Sample	Fieldwork period
Luxembourg	Telephone Omnibus	132	03.12. - 13.12.99
Poland	Face-to-Face Omnibus	301	03.12. - 08.12.99
Portugal	Face-to-Face Omnibus	207	16.12. - 23.12.99
Romania	Face-to-Face Omnibus	330	10.12. - 23.12.99
Spain	Face-to-Face Omnibus	192	01.12. - 22.12.99
Sweden	Telephone ad hoc	207	09.12. - 16.12.99
Czech Republic	Face-to-Face Omnibus	301	07.12. - 15.12.99
Hungary	Face-to-Face Omnibus	311	29.11. - 08.12.99
Austria	Telephone Omnibus	128	07.12. - 14.12.99 14.12. - 21.12.99
Great Britain	Face-to-Face Omnibus	298	19.11. - 26.11.99