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Children's Programs Presented on Nationally Sponsored
Network Time During the First Six Months of 1948

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To increase our knowledge of children's reading is to say, in part, that we must study their use of other media of communication. Serious studies which have dealt with children and network programs have in the main considered listening habits, program preferences, and the emotional and psychological reactions of the children. Furthermore, the studies have been of radio programs in general, since children as a rule seem to make little distinction between programs for adults and those for children. Iona Young has partially summarized studies made prior to 1942(1), and Azriel Eisenberg made a comprehensive study of the listening habits and reactions of children(2). Among other works on the subject may be noted the studies of the Radio Division of Ohio State University(3) and Lewis and McFadden's compilation of program patterns presented by local stations and national networks for young listeners(4).

The present analysis attempts to offer a reasonably current picture of the programs of the four national networks that were intended primarily for children and were aired during the first six months of 1948. Not concerned with the quality of the program content or the suitability of program types for children, the present study is limited to time allotted for programming, the age level for which the programs are designed, and the various types of content of the commercially sponsored and sustaining network programs intended for child audiences.

Sources for data used in the study include periodical literature, radio sections of newspapers, books, various educational publications of colleges and universities, and suggested readings and ephemeral descriptive data received in response to letters to broadcasting companies and organizations and groups interested in the field of children's radio programs. Discussion of these data should be considered in connection with the Master Table on page 13, with the following qualifications applying to the table itself:

- a) The age module is that suggested by Waller(5) as generally accepted by program planners: Pre-School: up to 6 years; Intermediate: 6 to 9 years; and Older: 9 to 14 years.
- b) The intention has been to include all children's programs offered by the networks to affiliated stations from January through June of 1948. Survey figures are based on the programming of an average week, on the assumption that during that average week all programs were presented.

- c) The radio time shown is as accurate as the vagaries of radio permit. It should be remembered that commercial program time changes can be as frequent as the renewal of the 13 week contract common to most radio shows, and that sustaining programs are subject to being cut or omitted entirely.
- d) According to Lewis and McFadden(6), the networks broadcast 40 programs for out-of-school listening in 1940 and only 27 such programs in 1945. In the present survey 36 programs are included.

Analysis of the Data

Figures from the questionnaires used in the Eisenberg study indicate that preferred weekday listening time for most children is from twilight through the early evening hours. Afternoon programs draw more weekend listeners, with Sunday and Saturday mornings next in that order(7). From the Time of Broadcast section of the Master Table, it can be computed that the networks devote $27\frac{1}{2}$ hours per week to programs designed for children. Programs for weekdays total 16 hours and 5 minutes of broadcast time, with supper hour programs representing all but 50 minutes of this time. The total for Saturday broadcasts is 8 hours and 55 minutes, with 2 of these hours in the afternoon. For Sunday the total is 2 hours and 30 minutes, all but 15 minutes of which are devoted to afternoon broadcasts. Distribution percentages of these $27\frac{1}{2}$ hours are 59% for weekday programs (3% morning, 56% afternoon), 32% Saturday programs, and 9% Sunday programs. The $27\frac{1}{2}$ hours of weekly broadcasts devoted to children represent approximately 7% of the average weekly network broadcasting total of 392 hours. In evaluating the above figures, remember that there were an estimated 73 million radios in the U.S. in 1948, and that the average number of child listeners per set was 0.35 in the daytime and 0.43 in the evening(8).

Section II of the Master Table classifies the 36 network programs by the age levels for which they are presented(9). Of these programs some 8, totaling 3 hours 45 minutes of weekly broadcast time, appeal to the pre-school child. For the intermediate group 13 programs are presented during 13 hours and 15 minutes. Some 25 other programs are scheduled for older children and are broadcast for a total of 20 hours and 35 minutes.

The borderline between the age levels to which the programs will appeal is often difficult to determine, and the overlapping of program appeal is evident in the percentage breakdown of the time allotted to the various levels, 14% for pre-school, 48% for intermediate, and 75% for older children. The large amount of time shown for the older group may have been due to the fact that the School of the Air was slanted toward this age group. The low percentage of time devoted to the pre-school age level perhaps raises the question of need for more equal program distribution among the various levels.

Of the 36 programs studied, 21 are sponsored commercially (Section III of the Master Table) and represent 61% of the weekly network broadcasting time for children's programs(10). The remaining 39% represents time given to 15 sustaining programs. It should be noted in connection with the time allotments indicated in the Master Key that a 15-minute commercial program is allowed to devote up to 3 minutes for advertising copy, and a 30-minute program up to $4\frac{1}{4}$ minutes(11). Were the 21 commercially sponsored programs to use the full amount of their advertising time, the 16 hours and 45 minutes of weekly program time could be reduced

by as much as 2 hours and 51 minutes. This situation obtaining, the sustaining program broadcasting time of 10 hours and 45 minutes will not suffer too greatly by comparison.

Classification of the 36 programs according to content type is shown in Section IV of the Master Table. From this it can be seen that 18 programs are basically original scripts. Of the other programs, 5 were based on comics, 4 began as books, 2 evolved from fairy tales or fantasy, 1 was based on a movie character, and 6 remained in a miscellaneous category. According to basis, the division of weekly network broadcasting time for children's programs is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED BY BASIS OF SCRIPT

Basis of Script	Broadcast Time	Percentage of Total	Commercial Programs	Sustaining Programs
Original	11 hrs. 30 min.	42	9	9
Comics	5 hrs. 45 min.	21	5	-
Miscellaneous	5 hrs. 30 min.	20	4	2
Book	2 hrs. 30 min.	9	2	2
Movie Character	1 hr. 15 min.	4	1	-
Fairy Tale	1 hr.	4	1	1
Total	27 hrs. 30 min.	100%	22	14

The main divisions of the subsection on program patterns are based on those used in the Lewis-McFadden survey(12). The serial, broadcast for 13 hours 15 minutes weekly, is the most popular program pattern, with 9 of the 13 serials falling in the adventure group. Only 3 programs, representing 4 hours 15 minutes of broadcasting time, can be classified as dramatic sketches, but it is interesting to note that 2 of them have received the award of the Institute for Education by Radio(13). Programs are grouped according to the patterns shown in Table 2. In this table, 3 programs of which 2 are sustaining, are classified as forums; it is possible that the ability of children to ad lib is responsible for the popularity of this pattern type(14).

TABLE 2. ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED BY PROGRAM PATTERN

Pattern	No. of Programs	Broadcast Time	Percentage of Total	Commercial Programs	Sustaining Programs
Adventure Serial	9	11 hrs. 30 min.	42	9	-
Variety Show	6	3 hrs. 30 min.	13	1	5
Stories	6	2 hrs. 15 min.	8	3	3
Serial	4	1 hr. 45 min.	6	2	2
Forum or Interview	4	1 hr. 45 min.	6	1	3
Dramatic Sketch	3	4 hrs. 14 min.	15	1	2
Quiz Show	3	1 hr. 30 min.	6	3	-
Music Show	1	1 hr.	4	-	1
Total	36	27 hrs. 30 min.	100%	20	16

The absence of the following program patterns is noted: hobbies, safety, pets and nature, newscasts, and religion. Lewis and MacFadden report that the 1940 network programs for children included all these patterns with the exception of newscasts, and that programs for 1945 show the additional omission of hobbies and nature(15). They further indicate that this omission is overcome by local programming in some areas, but no explanation is given for the omission of the patterns on the network programs.

Continuity types of radio programs, shown in subsection C in the Master Table, are classified according to the listing by Sherman P. Lawton, who has divided radio continuities into 3 main groups, namely(16):

Dramatic continuities: Those built of scenes of imaginary situations, intended for entertainment.

A) Play: Scenes related to each other by plot.

a) Single unit plays: Complete in one broadcast.

b) Serial: Ultimate conclusion: solution of plot in two or more broadcasts.

Revolving plot: continues indefinitely in series.

c) Unit-in-series: Separate plays with same general theme or subject matter.

B) Skits: Plotless scenes.

C) Adaptations: Manuscripts, books, etc., rewritten for broadcast purposes.

Novelties and specialties: Story telling, information contests, dramatic readings, spelling contests. etc.

Variety shows: Programs which include a number of different continuity types.

The revolving plot serial will be seen to head the list of dramatic continuity types used in children's network programs, with a total of 12 programs. The unit-in-series type is employed by 3 programs, and 2 others are adaptations. The other two major divisions accounted for 18 programs: 15 novelties and specialties and 3 variety shows. Symphonies for Youth is the only program which cannot, in some sense, be considered a continuity type. From a comparison of this subsection C with Section III, it is evident that commercial preference in the matter of continuity types is not the same as that of the sustaining programs. The distinction is made clear in Table 3.

TABLE 3. ALLOTMENT OF TIME, BY COMMERCIAL AND SUSTAINING SPONSORS, TO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED BY CONTINUITY TYPE

Continuity Type	Commercial		Sustaining	
	Number	% of Time	Number	% of Time
Revolving Plot Serial	11	47	1	2
Unit-in-Series	2	3	1	9
Adaptation	--	--	2	7
Novelty & Specialty	8	13	7	11
Story Telling	(4)		(2)	
Information Contests	(4)		(-)	
Other	(-)		(5)	
Variety Shows	--		3	8
Total	21	63%	14	37%

Section V of the Master Table is reserved for items that are not common to all of the 36 programs, e.g., music in more than limited quantity, participation of the audience in the show, and social attitudes. Information as to the program content of the children's network programs studied was gained from descriptive data furnished by the networks, from reviews in periodicals and newspapers, and from various studies of listening habits and program preferences. In some instances references are indicated in the paragraphs that follow; for other sources see items under footnote 17.

Information obtained relative to the network programs for children reveals that in some 10 programs, representing 30% of the broadcasting time given to children, music is an integral part of the program. Of these programs only 3 are commercially sponsored. This would appear to indicate that the question of the availability of network musical facilities to the sponsored program is one that needs consideration. Since no particular mention is found of the use of music in the remaining 26 programs, it is to be assumed that music plays only an incidental part in them, being used to suggest the theme song or indicate a passage of time, change of scene, or program break.

Analysis of the 36 programs shows that the audience participates in 5 of the network programs for children, and that one of these programs enlists its participants from the theatre audience. Of the 4 shows that depend to some degree upon the participation of the studio audience, 3 employ the quiz type of program, and the other utilizes the audience-interview technique.

The treatment of social problems is included in the program standards of the networks and the National Association of Broadcasters(18). While it is not within the scope of this paper to examine each of the children's programs for social attitudes, Section V of the Master Table lists 6 programs which appear to go beyond the standards mentioned above in their concern with outstanding moral, ethical, or social attitudes. They are as follows, with an indication as to whether they are commercially sponsored or sustaining programs: House of Mystery, intended to dispel fear and ignorance of superstition (commercial); Superman, dramatization of lessons in human relations in terms understood by children, with special emphasis on tolerance, bigotry, and prejudice (commercial); Mind Your Manners, features a panel of 3 boys and 3 girls who discuss manners and general deportment (sustaining); Child's World, entertainment, with educational and moral implications in a follow-up distribution by mail; groups of children discuss their ideas on moral and ethical issues; recordings have been used in a graduate seminar at Yale(19) (sustaining); Youth Asks the Government, interviews with government officials, which aim at contributing to youth's understanding of our government and public affairs (sustaining); Juvenile Jury, dealing with relationships with others, a panel of changing members presents varied views of the problems to be met by children of the ages from 6 through 12; eight Juvenile Jury shorts will be released by Universal-International Pictures each year(20) (sustaining).

Summary and Conclusions

From data presented it has been seen that, for the period under consideration, 36 network programs for children, representing 27½ hours of broadcasting time, and aired for the greater part at the supper hours and on Saturdays, were aimed at pleasing children of the three age levels in the order of: (a) older, (b) intermediate, and (c) pre-school. Commercially sponsored programs outnumbered sustaining by 6, although the amount of allowable time for advertising copy could reduce the difference in actual program time to as little as 4½ hours.

The basis for almost half (42%) of children's network radio programs is indicated to be original material. Miscellaneous bases accounted for an additional 20% of the programs, with comics, books, fairy tale and fantasy, and movie characters following in the order given. The adventure type serial is the most popular program pattern. Variety shows and stories are next in order, with music, and interviews falling far behind. A number of patterns offered by the networks in 1940 and 1945 were not offered in 1948.

Continuity type preferences of the commercial sponsors were noted in the following order: (a) revolving plot serial (dramatic continuity), (b) story telling and information contests (novelties and specialties), and (c) unit-in-series (dramatic continuity). Sustaining programs show a preference for (a) combinations of varieties and specialties, (b) variety shows, (c) story telling (novelties and specialties) and adaptations (dramatic continuities), and (d) unit-in-series and revolving plot serials (dramatic continuities). Only 7 sustaining and 3 commercially sponsored programs can be considered presentations in which music is an important feature. Two of the 6 programs necessitating audience participation in varying degrees indicate complete dependence on this program device. Further comparison of commercial and sustaining programs reveals that the commercial programs offer more variety in program content bases than do the sustaining programs. Although commercial programs present more varied program patterns, it would appear that the sustaining programs have a more even distribution of the patterns employed.

The 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours of weekly broadcast time allotted by the national networks for the presentation of children's programs represent no more than 7% of the combined time of the four networks and do not appear to be adequate. That local stations and local networks may, and in some cases do, assume responsibility of programming for children does not reduce the need for more national network programs for children. The conclusion to be drawn from the data of the present study is that the networks should increase the amount of broadcast time devoted to children's programs.

Furthermore, the data indicate that the national network programs are not sufficiently varied in range of program patterns. Among the patterns presented some are overemphasized, while others which would seem to merit considerable attention are aired for much shorter periods. Local stations and networks present a more varied fare and include several patterns unaccountably missing from the national networks. The programs of the latter offer room for greater variety of interests and values.

According to the figures of the present study, there is a need for more equitable distribution of programs for the three age levels, particularly with a larger number of programs for the pre-school age group. And lastly, the various levels would be better served if broadcasting time were spaced over longer periods during the range of broadcasting time.

Dr. Julius Yourman has suggested that children prefer adult programs because the programs designed and intended for children meet the needs of the children so rarely(21). Recent conferences and meetings such as those sponsored by the Institute for Education by Radio (Ohio State University) and attended by broadcasters; advertizers and educators would seem to indicate on their part a growth of interest in the development and improvement of children's programs, a desire for clearer understanding of programs for their younger listeners. Perhaps something will come of their concern.

Radio has recognized children as a vast potential audience. It has set up fair standards for the programs it designs for them and in some of the programs has incorporated timely issues and social attitudes. It is reasonable to assume that radio will continue to maintain an interest in these programs and that the national networks will further consider and act upon the needs of such presentations. On the basis of such assumption, a second study such as the present one might profitably be made at the end of 1950 or 1951.

APPENDIX A. MASTER TABLE OF ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FEATURES
OF CHILDREN'S RADIO PROGRAMS

Section I: Time of Broadcast

Weekdays, A.M.: (CW) (U) (Y)
 Weekdays, P.M.: (AP) (CM) (CT) (HH) (JA) (LR) (S) (SK) (SS) (TP)
 Saturday, A.M.: (AA) (AC) (AF) (CC) (J) (K) (LL) (LP) (M) (MM) (R) (SE) (SS)
 Saturday, P.M.: (DI) (MY) (SY)
 Sunday, A.M.: (SO)
 Sunday, P.M.: (HM) (JJ) (L) (Q) (TA)

Section II: Age Level

Pre-School: (CC) (LL) (LP) (SE) (SO) (SS) (TA) (U)
 Intermediate: (CC) (CM) (CW) (HH) (L) (LL) (MY) (S) (SA) (SO) (TM) (TP)
 Older: (AA) (AC) (AF) (AP) (CM) (CW) (DI) (DT) (HH) (HM) (J) (JA)
 (JJ) (L) (LR) (M) (MM) (Q) (R) (S) (SA) (SK) (SY) (TM) (Y)

Section III: Status

Commercial: (AA) (CM) (DI) (DT) (HH) (HM) (JA) (JJ) (K) (L) (LL) (LP) (LR)
 (MM) (Q) (S) (SE) (SK) (TM) (TP) (U)
 Sustaining: (AC) (AF) (AP) (CC) (CW) (J) (M) (MY) (R) (SA) (SO) (SS) (SY)
 (TA) (Y)

Section IV: Content

A. Basis

Book (AF) (AP) (L) (TA)
 Fairy Tale (SE) (SS)
 Comics (AA) (DT) (LR) (TP) (S)
 Movie character (TM)
 Original (AC) (CC) (CM) (CW) (HH) (J) (JA) (JJ) (LL)
 (LP) (M) (MM) (MY) (R) (SK) (SO) (U) (Y)
 Miscellaneous (DI) (HM) (K) (Q) (SS) (SY)

B. Pattern

Serial (AA) (AF) (L) (MM)
 Adventure Serial (CM) (DT) (HH) (JA) (LR) (S) (SK) (TM) (TP)
 Dramatic Sketch (AP) (HM) (SA)
 Stories (LL) (LP) (SO) (SS) (TA) (U)
 Variety Show (AC) (CC) (J) (M) (R) (SE)
 Quiz Show (DI) (K) (Q)
 Music Show (SY)
 Other (CW) (JJ) (MY) (Y)

C. Continuity Type	
Revolving Plot Serial	(AA) (AF) (CM) (DT) (HH) (JA) (LR) (MM) (S) (SK) (TM) (TP)
Unit-in-Series	(HM) (L) (SA)
Adaptations	(AP) (TA)
Novelties and Specialties	
Story telling	(LL) (LP) (SE) (SO) (SS) (U)
Information contests	(DI) (JJ) (K) (Q)
Other	(AC) (CW) (MY) (R) (Y)
Variety Show	(CC) (J) (M)

Section V: Miscellaneous Data

Music as an integral part	(AP) (CC) (J) (LP) (M) (SA) (SE) (SS) (SY) (U)
Audience Participation	(AC) (DI) (J) (K) (R) (SY)
Social Attitudes	(CW) (HM) (JJ) (MY) (S) (Y)

KEY TO PROGRAM TITLES IN MASTER TALBE

Symbol	Title	Total Weekly Time	Symbol	Title	Total Weekly Time
AA	Adv. of Archie Andrews	30	LR	Lone Ranger	90
AC	Abbott and Costello	30	M	Make Way for Youth	30
AF	Adv. of Frank Merriwell	30	MM	Meet the Meeks	30
AP	Adventure Parade	75	MY	Mind Your Manners	30
CC	Coast to Coast on a Bus	60	Q	Quiz Kids	30
CM	Captain Midnight	75	R	Red Barbour's Clubhouse	30
CW	Child's World	30	S	Superman	75
DI	Dr. I.Q., Jr.	30	SA	School of the Air	150
DT	Dick Tracy	75	SE	Smilin' Ed McConnell	30
HH	Hop Harrigan	75	SK	Sky King	60
HM	House of Mystery	30	SO	Story to Order	15
J	Junior Junction	30	SS	Story Shop	30
JA	Jack Armstrong	90	SY	Symphonies for Youth	60
JJ	Juvenile Jury	30	TA	Tell It Again	30
K	Keep Up With the Kids	30	TM	Tom Mix	75
L	Lassie	15	TP	Terry and the Pirates	75
LL	Land of the Lost	30	U	Uncle Lumpy	05
LP	Let's Pretend	25	Y	Youth Asks the Government	15

FOOTNOTES

(1) Iona Young, A Preliminary Survey of Interests and Preferences of Primary Children in Motion Pictures, Comic Strips and Radio (Emporia, Kansas: State Teachers College, 1942), passim.

(2) Azriel L. Eisenberg, Children and Radio Programs (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1936), passim.

- (3) Institute for Education by Radio, Education on the Air, 17th Yearbook (Columbus: Ohio State Univ., 1947), passim.
- (4) Dorothy Lewis and Dorothy L. McFadden, Program Patterns for Young Listeners (Wash.: N.A.B., 1948), passim.
- (5) Judith Waller, "Are Children's Radio Programs Disappearing?" National Parent Teacher, 38 (June 1944), pp. 7-9.
- (6) Lewis and McFadden, op. cit., pp. 56-58.
- (7) Eisenberg, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
- (8) Wilbur Schramm, Mass Communications (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1949), pp. 547, 551.
- (9) Loc. cit.
- (10) Jack Alicoate, 1948 Radio Annual (N.Y.: Radio Daily, 1948), passim.
- (11) National Association of Broadcasters, Standards of Practice (Wash.: N.A.B., 1948), p. 9.
- (12) Lewis and McFadden, op. cit., passim.
- (13) House of Mystery, 1946, the first time the award went to a sponsored program; and School of the Air, 1947.
- (14) Lewis and McFadden, op. cit., p. 2.
- (15) Ibid., p. 56.
- (16) Sherman Lawton, Radio Continuity Types (Boston: The Expression Co., 1938), pp. x-xix.
- (17) American Broadcasting Company, Check List of Public Interest Programs (N.Y.: A.B.C., 1948), Jan.-Dec., 1948; Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., CBS Listener's Guide (New York, CBS, 1948), Winter, 1947-1948 and Spring 1948 (Circular no. 69 & 70); Josette Frank, "Section on radio programs for children," Child Study, 23-25 (1946-48), passim.; Dorothy Gordon, All Children Listen (N.Y.: Geo W. Stewart, 1942), passim.; Mutual Broadcasting Company, Children's Programs, September 15, 1948 (N.Y.: M.B.S., 1948), passim.; Mutual Broadcasting Company, Programs in the Public Interest, March 1, 1947 (N.Y.: M.B.S., 1947), passim.; National Broadcasting Company, How to Cook a Dragon (N.Y.: N.B.C., 1948), passim.; National Broadcasting Company, On the Dial (N.Y.: N.B.C., Apr.-Sept. 1948), passim.; New York Times, Section II, radio page (Sunday issues, January through June, 1948), passim.
- (18) Mutual Broadcasting System, Program Standards (N.Y.: Mutual, 1945), pp. 27-28; National Association of Broadcasters, Program Standards, p. 4; National Broadcasting Company, Program Policies and Working Manual (N.Y.: N.B.C., 1944), pp. 5-6.
- (19) Movie Mirror, 31 (March 1, 1947) 8.

- p. 8. (20) Mutual Broadcasting System, Programs in the Public Interest, op. cit.,
- (21) Institute for Education by Radio, op. cit., p. 299.

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