



Report: Subtitles, captions enrich kids content experience

The results of a new survey from Kids Industries shows that nearly half of all US and UK parents surveyed said their child needed subtitles or closed captioning to enjoy media content.

By Sadhana Bharanidharan

July 4, 2022

The benefits of subtitles and closed captions (CC) go beyond increasing access to screen content and appear to enhance children’s enjoyment of it overall, according to a new report.

Kids Industries (Ki), a London-based research and marketing agency, conducted a survey of 2001 parents of kids (ages five to 15) in the US and the UK for the report, which examined subjects around representation and inclusivity in kids’ media. The report revealed a high usage of closed captions by US parents and pointed to a need to enhance quality and access to them, especially in the UK.

Ki CEO **Gary Pope** tells *Kidscreen* that subtitles can help kids start to see narrative in a “richer” way. “Subtitles add an increased dimension of understanding to viewing—giving a wider perspective, a divergence of input

helps the children make deeper meaning,” he says.

Among the findings, a majority of US parents surveyed (74%) reported that their child watches content with subtitles or closed captions while nearly a quarter (24%) stated they were used all or most of the time. Furthermore, 50% of both US and UK parents said that their child needed subtitles or CC to enjoy screen content.

“As a former teacher, I know that they also increase children’s vocabulary, comprehension and they absolutely help to improve the speed of reading,” Pope explains, highlighting the educational benefits of subtitles.

“Through the pleasure of watching the content they enjoy, reading becomes a natural process for them. They end up developing their literacy without even realizing and that is the best kind of development.”

In terms of quality, 64% of all parents surveyed said that subtitles/CC for their child’s media are always accurate. The report also highlighted room for improvement in terms of accessibility as only 46% of UK parents reported a subtitle/CC option in all the media their child loves, compared to 63% of US parents.

Pope underlines the importance of improving accuracy and increasing the range of programmes and content supported with subtitles. “[Kidcos] have a vested interest in doing so too as better alignment with the storyline and characters will result in a closer relationship with their viewers too—and who doesn’t want that?”