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Implications of Screen Use in Young Children's Occupations

Denise G. Doria, OTS

Thomas Jefferson University, denise.doria@jefferson.edu

Michele Mathew, OTS

Thomas Jefferson University, michelle.mathew@jefferson.edu

Mary Muhlenhaupt, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Thomas Jefferson University, mary.muhlenhaupt@jefferson.edu

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Introduction

OTs need to address both the duration and quality of screen media children use, to promote their development and participation in healthy occupations.

Trends in Media Use

- 2/3 children and teens report their parents have “no rules” about media time (Strasburger et al., 2013)
- By 8 y/o, children are engaged in nearly 8 hours screen media each day (Strasburger et al., 2013; Lillard & Peterson, 2011)
- Children spend an average of 40 hrs/wk engaged in television, movies, and/or video games, which is more time than they spend in any other activity besides sleep (Gentile, Reimer, Nathanson, Walsh, & Eisenmann, 2014).
- 39% of children < 8 y/o live in homes where the television is left on all or most of the time, whether or not anyone is watching (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010).
- Conversely, when parents establish media rules, media use ↓ by ~3 hours (National Institutes of Health, 2013)



Impact on Development

Attention

- **TV:** Early television exposure (ages 1 and 3) associated with attention problems at 7 yrs (Christakis, Zimmerman, DiGiuseppe, & McCarty, 2004)

Executive Functioning

- **Fast-paced TV:** 9 mins of viewing → immediate negative effects on 4 y/o (Lillard & Peterson, 2011)

Physical Health

- ↑ screen time in early childhood is associated with ↓ time spent in physical activities & ↑ likelihood of being overweight or obese. (Gentile et al. 2014)

Play

- **Background TV:** ↓ toy play episode length and attention (Linebarger & Walker, 2005)

Sleep

- 90% of studies: adverse association between screen time and sleep (Hale & Guan, 2014)
 - Computer use (94%), Video Games (86%), Mobile Devices (83%), TV (76%)
 - **Interactive** has less adverse effects on sleep than **passive** screen time
- ↑ arousal levels depend on type of screen media → affect child’s ability to fall and remain asleep. (Hale & Guan, 2014)
- **Tablet use:** 2 hours exposure to bright screens contributes to ↓ melatonin (Hale & Guan, 2014)

Social Skills

- **Media violence:** is a causal factor in real-life violence and aggression (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2012)
- Children showed disruptive behaviors when caregivers used a **mobile screen device** during mealtime (Radesky et al., 2014)

Educational TV - Positive Impacts

- ↑ vocabulary, school performance, & narrative language (Linebarger & Vaala, 2010)
- In adolescence → greater creativity, academic achievement, and decreased aggression (Anderson et al., 2001)



Recommendations

AAP: > 2 years old, < 2 hours recreational screen time/day
NASPE Active Play Guidelines: toddlers and preschoolers - at least 60 minutes/day; should not be sedentary > 60 minutes at a time

- Discuss media use and “screen time diet” with family/caregiver - include child
- Establish media limits in child’s weekly routines and during family time, with family/child co-viewing encouraged

Parents should actively mediate content and time (Gentile et al., 2014)

- Facilitate conversation during commercials
- Emphasize interactive, educational, and culturally diverse programming (ie: Sesame Street)
- Reduce/eliminate fast-paced TV, media during mealtime and before bedtime
- Discourage media use when friends are visiting

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Denise Doria, OTS, Michelle Mathew, OTS,
& Mary Muhlenhaupt, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Thomas Jefferson University, Department of Occupational Therapy
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