

Supplemental Report: Children and Screen Time

April 2017

Background

In June of 2016, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) published the report “Children and Screen Time”, summarizing research findings and recommendations for parents and educators regarding the educational and social use of digital media with children. The report expressed support for the American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) recognition of the reality that today’s children grow up fully engaged in digital media, which can have both positive and negative effects on development. The overall message was to balance media use with other healthy behaviors.

Among various studies supporting and contesting the benefits of digital media use reported since the publication of the SCCOE report, there appears to be no one size fits all solution for defining the appropriate amount of screen time for school aged children and adolescents. For such children, moderate screen time use is considered acceptable unless it interferes with other positive behaviors like outdoor

inappropriate, or unsafe content and contacts; and compromised privacy and confidentiality. Parents face challenges in monitoring their children's and their own media use and in serving as positive role models. In this new era, evidence regarding healthy media use does not support a one size fits all approach. Parents and pediatricians can work together to develop a Family Media Use Plan (Family Media Use Plan) that considers their children's developmental stages to individualize an appropriate balance for media time and consistent rules about media use, to mentor their children, to set boundaries for accessing content and displaying personal information, and to implement open family communication

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their children that attend to each child's age, health, temperament, and developmental stage. Research evidence shows that children and teenagers need adequate sleep, physical activity, and time away from media. Pediatricians can help families develop a Family Media Use Plan ([Family Media Use Plan](#)) that prioritizes these and other health goals.

Resources for Parents and Community

Additional resources for informing children's technology and media use can be found at the Common Sense Media website at [Common Sense Media](#). Common Sense Media is a San Francisco based non profit organization that provides education and advocacy to promote safe technology and media for children. The website contains links to research, reviews, and practical advice for parents, for educators, and for advocates. Free education programs include a Connecting Families Program, which can be used to engage and educate parents and communities about issues ranging from media violence and commercialism to cyberbullying and cellphone etiquette; and a K-12 Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum consisting of more than 60 lesson plans, student handouts, videos and interactive components that span three topic areas: Safety and Security, Digital Citizenship, and Research and Information Literacy.

Recommendations

The SCCOE reiterates its earlier finding that educators play a key role in teaching digital and media literacy to their students, by guiding them to engage in appropriate, positive, and

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