Zoomed Out

Kids and Screen Time

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Conflicts of Interest/Disclosures

The content represents the presenter's personal opinions and does not necessarily represent the position of the presenter's previous employers or previous training sites.

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Following this lecture, participants should be able to:

1. Define “screen time”.
2. Describe children’s screen time use and its associations with mental health.
3. Describe evidence-based parental recommendations regarding management of screen time.

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Are Screens Good or Bad for Children & Teens?

- Unhelpful question
  - All or nothing?
  - Evidence-based?
  - Emotional response?
  - Generational critique?

- Screens are not going away

What is "screen time?"

- The amount of time spent on electronics
  - Smartphones
  - Televisions
  - Video game consoles
  - Computers
  - Tablets
  - E-readers
  - Wearables
  - VR goggles
  - "...anything with a blinking light"

What are the current AAP recommendations on amount of screen time?

Age of Child	2016 AAP Guidelines
Less than 18 months	NO screen media other than video-chatting
18 to 24 months	Parents could introduce high-quality programming & should co-view to explain the content
2 – 5 years	1 hour per day of high-quality programs; parents should co-view.
6 years and older	Parents should "place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health."*
	Parents should designate media-free times (dinner, driving) and media-free zones at home (bedrooms).
	Parents should frequently communicate about online safety and civility.

https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx

TABLE A. Screen Media Use, by Device and Age, 2017

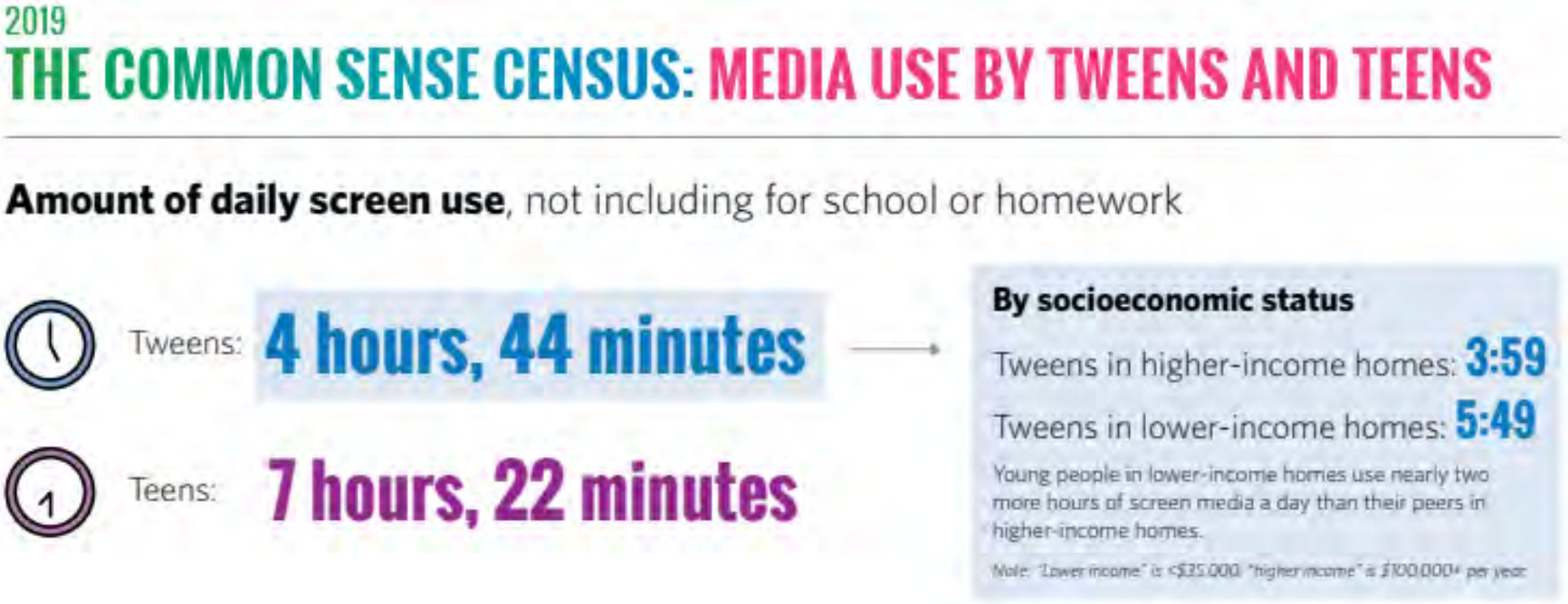
Average time spent daily (hours:minutes)

Device	All	Child's age		
	0 to 8	Under 2	2 to 4	5 to 8
Television set	:58	:29[a]	1:09[b]	1:04[b]
DVD/videotape	:17	:06[a]	:23[b]	:18[b]
Mobile device	:48	:07[a]	:58[b]	1:02[b]
Computer	:10	*[a]	:05[b]	:20[c]
Video game device	:06	*[a]	:04[b]	:12[c]
Total screen media	**2:19**	**:42[a]**	**2:39[b]**	**2:56[b]**

*Less than one minute but more than zero.

Note: Only those items with different superscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$). Significance should be read across rows.

Source: *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Kids Age Zero to Eight 2017*

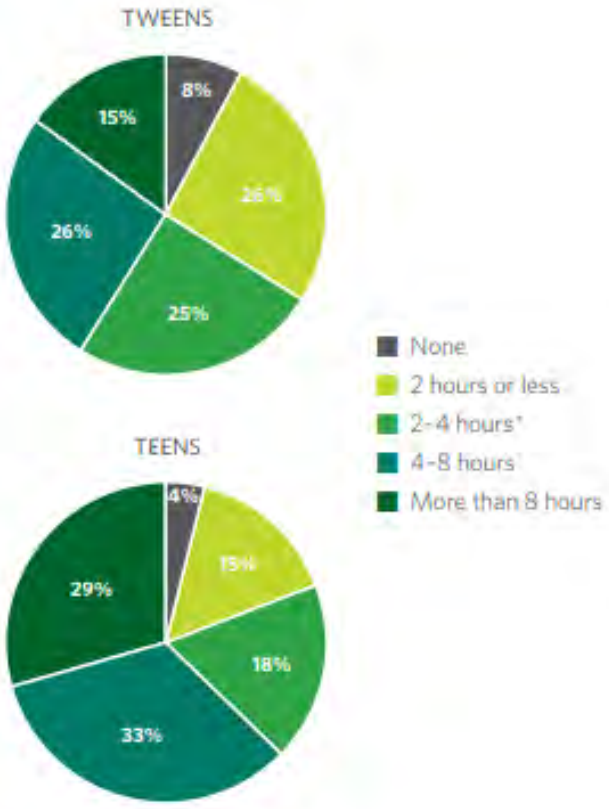


Source: *The Common Sense Census: www.commonsensemedia.org*

2019

THE COMMON SENSE CENSUS: MEDIA USE BY TWEENS AND TEENS

FIGURE A. Screen media: Percent who use for ... hours per day, by age, 2019



*Includes from 2:01 up to and including 4 hours.
†Includes from 4:01 up to and including 8 hours.

Note: Segments may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: *The Common Sense Census: www.commonsensemedia.org*

Potential Benefits of Screens

- Learning
  - Teach strategy, critical thinking, collaborative play, resource management, creativity
- Information
  - Greater access to information, increased computer literacy, facilitates academic engagement
- Social
  - Communicate with friends and family over greater distances with more interactivity, access to a wider social network
- Equality
  - Levels the playing field for access to disadvantaged individuals

Potential Disadvantages of Screens

- Opportunity Cost with regard to other enriching activities…
  - Exercise & play
  - Time spent on academics / homework completion
  - Face-to-face time with friends and family
  - Sleep onset and quality
  - Developing off-line social skills

Associations* with Mental Health in Children and Adolescents

- LOTS of cross-sectional studies have sounded the alarm…
  - Increased screen time associated with lower physical activity, higher depressive & anxiety symptoms, lower self-esteem, poorer sleep, behavior problems & agression[1-6]
- What about happiness & life satisfaction?
  - Teens who spent 1-2 hours per day reported greater life satisfaction than those who spent **less** or **more**[7,8]
- An early review (2014) showed that overall, findings were mixed with regard to screen time and youth mental health.[9]

Recent (2019-2020) high-quality reviews:

"[T]he research field is dominated by cross-sectional work that is generally of a low quality standard."[10]

"[T]he association between digital technology use… and psychological well-being is – on average – negative but very small."[10]

[Findings from existing studies] are unlikely to be of clinical or practical significance."[11]

"Results did not support the hypothesis that effect sizes between [teen depression] and screen and social media use are increasing over time (2001-2017)."[12]

"For any given year, most effect sizes were below the r = .10 threshold."[12]

"The association we find between digital technology use and adolescent well-being is negative but small, explaining at most 0.4% of the variation in well-being."[13]

Other Problems with Screen Time Research

1. Not enough RCTs
2. Can't distinguish cause & effect
3. Difficulties in measuring "screen time"
4. Typically self-report
5. Lack of use of standardized measures
6. Few intervention studies

“The Use of Screens is a Skill”

- To discourage all-or-nothing thinking, encourage parents to view screen time use as *a set of emerging skills* they need to actively teach their child over the long-term:
  - Managing how long to be on a screen
  - How to transition to-and-from screens *calmly*
  - When **not** to use screens
  - Safe use of accessing age-appropriate content
  - Safe communication with others
  - Maintaining privacy

Setting Limits on Screens:
General Recommendations for Parents

- General Family Policy: *Screen time is a privilege, not a right*
- All or most recreational screen time is earned
  - Balance access with performance (e.g., academics, behavior, interpersonal, etc.)
- Be proactive, have a discussion early on before introducing a new screen
- Learn about the device and the content the child is interested in
- Parents should model appropriate use of screens

Recommendations for Setting Limits on Screens

- Timing
  - Completely off limits
    - Bedtimes, homework time, driving
  - Allowed times
    - After completion of common routines
      - Chores, homework
    - Time-limited entertainment
      - Long trips, emergency time-filler
- Locations
  - Where can the child use their screens?
    - Common areas are preferable

Recommendations for Setting Limits on Screens

- Managing Access
  - Explore Parental Controls
  - Storage of devices
  - Reinforce access via a privilege
- Monitoring
  - Parents know passwords to phone, apps, and web accounts
  - If concerned about trust, review what communications are shared via texts, social media, and games
  - Review privacy settings
  - Have discussions about how to interpret online communications

Parenting Resources for Screen Time

- Media Use Plan
  - http://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan
- Common Sense Media
  - https://www.commonsensemedia.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics
  - https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
  - https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/tools-resources/tools-reduce-screen-time.htm

Digital Controls

Medium	What to Search online
Phones/Tablets	
Apple/iOS Screen Time	“iphone family time”
Amazon Kindle Free Time	“kindle free time”
Google/Android Family Link	“google family link”
Remote Control Across Platforms	OurPact, ScreenTime
Video Game Systems	
Xbox/Xbox Live	“xbox parental controls”
PlayStation	“playstation parental controls”
Computers/Laptops	
Windows	“microsoft family safety”
Mac/Apple OSX	“mac parental controls

QUESTIONS?

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