
NEWSLETTER

Screen Exposure, Parental Mediation and Media Addiction in Preschool Children

By Zhang, Q.

Correspondence to: Qing Zhang, Communication University of China, China. E-mail: sunny322@vip.126.com

THE intensifying medialization of society has exacerbated the issue of child media addiction. Research has shown that media addiction can cause a variety of physical and mental problems such as obesity, myopia, sleep difficulty, and anxiety. Media addiction in preschool children is likely to impose a persistent negative impact on their lifetime development. Early intervention in child media behavior proves to be more effective than that occurs in later stages of their lives. This study conducted an online questionnaire survey of 2046 parents of preschool children aged between three and six to investigate the relations between child screen exposure, parental mediation, and child media addiction.

Research Findings:

- Among children of parents polled, 58.7% were exposed to screen for over one hour every day, and 28.3% have become addicted to the use of media. Mobile screen (smartphones and tablets) was the primary vehicle for preschool children's access to media. Watching short videos has become the second most popular activity in screen use among preschool children.
- Parental mediation was implemented in three forms: restrictive mediation, active mediation, and co-use. All of them had impacts on screen time of preschool children, whereas only parent-child co-use exhibited significant intervention effects on child media addiction.
- Media addiction in preschool children intensified as their screen time increased. According to the media sensory curation theory, preschool children use media to meet their sensory needs, as opposed to adults' and adolescents' purposes for using media – to acquire information, reach emotional communication, develop relationships, etc.

Suggestions:

- Parents should view child media use objectively. The benefits of screen media as convenient, content-rich, highly interactive tools should be fully utilized to support high-quality development of preschool children.
- Parents should pay attention to improving their own media literacy and their education on child media use.

- Preschool children media addiction intervention requires joint efforts of all parties of society to ensure child healthy growth, such as governmental supervision, community support, media platform self-regulation, kindergarten guidance, and parental mediation.

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