Today’s piece was prepared by Heather Burton, MD based on a CNN story [‘Little Evidence That Screen Time is Harmful for Kids, Say Doctors’](https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/04/health/screen-time-guidance-children-gbr-scli-intl/index.html)

This article published by CNN discusses the recommendations for screen time for children in the context of a report by the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health in the UK. The article title catches the audience’s eye because it claims that screen time does not have negative effects on children. The current British recommendations do not put a limit on screen time, which is different from the previous AAP guidelines which recommended no more than 1 hour of screen time for children under 5. Interestingly, the article then goes on to discuss the many negative effects that a sedentary lifestyle with lots of screen time can have on children, including cardiovascular disease, poor sleep hygiene, obesity, and poor mental health. The article claims that although these issues are all related to screen time, there is no evidence that any of these are ‘direct’ toxic effects of screen time.

The title of this article is very misleading and is not representative of the content of the UK Pediatrics recommendations about screen time. The title asserts that there are no negative effects from screen time because there is no known direct causal link; however, as the article points out, there are numerous indirect negative consequences associated with excessive screen time. The British guidelines say that there is simply not enough evidence about screen time to recommend a maximum time limit. It seems that some parents may want reassurance that screen time is not harmful to their children, and this article may be appealing to this crowd and mis-interpreting guidelines and medical recommendations.

**RESOURCES ON SCREEN TIME:**[Media and Young Minds](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591) *American Academy of Pediatrics 2016 Policy*[Where We Stand: Screen Time](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Where-We-Stand-TV-Viewing-Time.aspx) *Healthychildren.org*

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