Today’s piece was prepared by Wesley Gifford, MD based on an article found online at CNN [Letting a baby play on an iPad might lead to speech delays, study says](http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/04/health/babies-screen-time-speech-delays-study/).

The article was written about a study that will be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies meeting in San Francisco on May 6, 2017, which identifies an association between use of smartphones, tablets, and/or electronic games and expressive speech delays in toddlers. This article addresses the increasing concern that ubiquitous exposure to electronic devices and use by young children may interfere with the timely acquisition of important developmental skills. The main result quoted in the article, which is admittedly incomplete and difficult to understand based on the limited detail provided, was that 20% of children at 18 months of age were using these devices an average of 28 minutes per day and with each additional 30 minutes of daily use, the risk of expressive speech delay increased by 49%. The author carefully included direct quotes by the study’s senior investigator that emphasizes that this study was preliminary and that all results must be tempered by the fact that this study does not prove causation between device use and speech delay. The author also provided commentary by other experts in the field about how to interpret the results and even discussed some very important limitations of the study, including a lack of focus on whether the media content on the electronic device affected the degree of speech delay or whether other parenting behaviors, such as talking, singing, and reading with their children at other times of the day, could mitigate the effect. On the other hand, the article is frustrating due to the lack of detail provided because it makes the quality of the original research un-interpretable, it doesn’t delineate the types of biases introduced by the study design, and it doesn’t provide a link to the original work for deeper investigation. The article does, however, accomplish its ostensible goal: to keep this important topic in the minds of parents while more and better studies are conducted.

**RESOURCES ON MEDIA & OTHER TECHNOLOGY USE AMONG CHILDREN:**

[Screen-time](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time) Guidance from Common Sense Media for parents, teachers & policy-makers on using screen-time wisely
[Media and Children Communication Toolkit](https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx) *American Academy of Pediatrics*[Family Media Plan](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx) *Guide from HealthyChildren.org (endorsed by AAP)*[Reach Out and Read: Washington State](http://www.reachoutandreadwa.org/) *Emphasizes the importance of time spent by adult caregivers in reaching out by reading with their childr*e*n*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!