Today’s piece was prepared by Sarah Hutcheson, MD, based on a Time article [There’s Worrying New Research About Kids’ Screen Time and Their Mental Health](http://time.com/5437607/smartphones-teens-mental-health/).

This article reports on a recent study published in *Preventive Medicine Reports*, which used data from the Census Bureau’s 2016 National Survey of Children’s Health to analyze the correlation between hours of screen time in children and rates of symptoms including depression, anxiety and inattention. The article makes a compelling case to families that teenagers (ages 14-17) who spend more than 7 hours daily using screens outside of schoolwork have a higher incidence of anxiety and depression, as well as increased distractibility, decreased “emotional stability” and trouble with making friends and completing tasks. This article does not define these terms or elaborate on how the study claims to have investigated these traits. The authors point out that this trend also seems to be present, to a lesser degree, in children who use screens for 4 hours. This article does discuss current AAP recommendations regarding screen time for children ages 2-5 years old, but omits the existing recommendations for adolescents and suggests that they do not exist. The authors of this article interviewed a different researcher who has published previous studies, also using U.S. census data, which have suggested that the AAP guidelines around screen time are unwarranted. This researcher argues that much of the work looking at the effects of screen time in children does not truly prove that the symptoms they’re seeing are directly linked to screen use. Overall, I think that this article does a reasonable job of summarizing the results of a recent research study, and presenting arguments from experts on the topic with opposing viewpoints, while mostly suggesting that screen time has negative impacts on children’s mental health and neurodevelopment. However, this article does not evaluate the relative strength of the evidence on either side of the argument.

**RESOURCES ON SCREENTIME & OTHER MEDIA:**

[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, including their policy statements for children and adolescents

\**The study discussed in the article can be found* [*here*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335518301827)*, and the opposing study mentioned* [*here*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/cdev.13007)*.*

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