

Interdisciplinary Summit on Children and Screen Time

November 1, 2017 | Washington, D.C.



For Immediate Release

Contact: Pam Hurst-Della Pietra, 631-675-6023

pam@childrenandscreens.com

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

PEDIATRIC MEDIA EXPERTS RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT GROWING HEALTH ISSUE: CHILDREN AND SCREEN TIME

PEDIATRICS Journal Releases First-Ever Supplement Dedicated to Effects of Digital Media on Children

Washington, DC: As the iPhone turns 10, screen time—and lots of it—has changed reality for today’s kids, and even babies. Teens (ages 13-18) spend an average of 9 hours each day on entertainment media use, excluding time spent at school or for homework, and tweens (ages 8-12) spend just under 6 hours per day. Even a majority of toddlers spend more than an hour each day in front of a digital screen. Yet despite its omnipresence, digital media’s effects on childhood development, including cognitive, psychological, social, behavioral and physical developmental impacts, remain largely unknown. Parents today navigate uncharted waters on issues from cyberbullying to internet addiction, while experts are only beginning to ask, let alone answer, questions about the unintended consequences of our daily digital diet.

At an event hosted by *Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development*, pediatric media experts, researchers and policymakers discussed what we know, and what we still need to learn, about the relationship between kids and screens—while offering policy recommendations and practical guidelines for policymakers, clinicians, educators and parents.

“The digital media landscape is evolving so quickly, we need our research to catch up just to answer some basic questions,” said Dr. Pam Hurst-Della Pietra, Founder of Children and Screens. “How can we make the digital media environment better for kids? Does it matter that we’ve become a society that talks to one another less and makes less frequent eye contact? Are there unintended consequences of requiring middle-schoolers to have iPads for school use? We can’t wait a generation to learn the impacts of a technological revolution that’s happening as we speak (or don’t, as the case may be).”

The panel was moderated by Amy Joyce, the editor for *Washington Post’s* “On Parenting” section, and was timed with the release of the first-ever special supplement to *Pediatrics Journal*, sponsored by Children and Screens, on the issue.

“Policymakers have a critical role to play in ensuring that we can properly fund research on the relationship between children and digital media,” said Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). “The last time significant legislation on children and digital media was raised in Congress, the iPhone had barely come to market. The world is completely different now, and we need to update our laws and our research to reflect those changes.” “Today children are immersed in media and it affects every aspect of their cognitive, social and emotional development from birth to adulthood.

PEDIATRIC MEDIA EXPERTS RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT GROWING HEALTH ISSUE: CHILDREN AND SCREEN TIME

We can no longer afford to ignore or minimize its impact. This seminal supplement to *Pediatrics*, provides a comprehensive assessment of our current knowledge and what more we need to learn,” said Dimitri Christakis, MD, MPH, Director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development, Seattle Children’s Hospital Research Institute; Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington.

Children and Screens—an independent, interdisciplinary nonprofit organization seeking objective, scientific, fundamental insights into children's engagement with digital media—is bringing together diverse stakeholders to answer these pressing questions.

Other panelists included Kathryn Montgomery, PhD, Founder, Center for Media Education; Director of Communications Studies, American University; Ellen Wartella, PhD, Professor of Communication, Northwestern University, Co-Principal Investigator, Children’s Digital Media Center; and Dr. Kaveri Subrahmanyam, Chair, Department of Child and Family Studies at California State University, Los Angeles; Associate Director of the Children's Digital Media Center, UCLA/Cal State LA

#