

Maybe you're being too strict with your kid's screen time, study suggests

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Facebook is coming for your kids. The social media giant is launching a messaging app for children to chat with their parents and with friends approved by their parents. (Dec. 4) AP

Guidelines aimed at limiting how much time children spend in front of screens might not be as useful as first thought, [researchers suggest in a new study](#).

The study, published in the journal *Child Development*, found restrictions on children's time in front of smartphones or tablets were out-of-date, said researchers from Oxford University's Internet Institute and Cardiff University.

Researchers tested guidelines implemented in 2016 by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which suggest limiting screen time to one hour per day of high-quality programs for children ages 2 to 5 years, while kids ages 6 and older should have "consistent limits" on time spent with screens.

Along with data from approximately 20,000 telephone interviews with parents, the study found limiting screen time doesn't necessarily impact a child's mental wellness.

"Our findings suggest the broader family context, how parents set rules about digital screen time, and if they're actively engaged in exploring the digital world together, are more important than the raw screen time," said Oxford Internet Institute's Dr. Andrew Przybylski, lead author of the study.

Przybylski suggests more research into how enjoying screen time with

parents or caregivers in a social way can affect kids' psychological wellbeing.

Researchers also say AAP guidelines might be out of date because they don't account for how prevalent smartphones and tablets are in everyday life. "It is incumbent on researchers to conduct rigorous, up-to-date research that identifies mechanisms by and the extent to which screen-time exposure might affect children, said study co-author Dr. Netta Weinstein of Cardiff University.

The study follows a [call from media experts in November for additional research](#) into screen time and how it impacts children.