

Children's screen time use remains higher than prepandemic

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Screen time among children increased during the COVID-19 pandemic

and remained elevated after public health precautions were lifted, according to a study published online Feb. 15 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Monique M. Hedderson, Ph.D., from Kaiser Permanente Northern California in Oakland, and colleagues assessed how [screen time](#) changed as the pandemic progressed among 228 children (aged 4 to 12 years). Screen time use was compared for a prepandemic period (July 2019 to March 2020), pandemic period 1 (December 2020 to April 2021), and pandemic period 2 (May 2021 to August 2021).

The researchers found that prepandemic mean total screen time was 4.4 hours per day, which increased 1.75 hours per day in the first pandemic period and 1.11 hours per day in the second pandemic period. For recreational screen time, usage was 4.0 hours per day prepandemic, which increased 0.89 hours per day in the first pandemic period and 0.70 hours per day in the second pandemic period. For educational screen time, prepandemic mean time was 0.5 hours per day, which increased 0.93 hours per day in the first pandemic period and 0.46 hours per day in the second pandemic period.

"Families may need [support](#) to re-establish healthy screen time usage and healthy behaviors as the pandemic continues," the authors write.

"Pediatricians may need to provide more [guidance](#) and strategies regarding healthy screen time usage for [children](#)'s health and well-being."

More information: Monique M. Hedderson et al, Trends in Screen Time Use Among Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic, July 2019 Through August 2021, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.56157](#)

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