

COVID-19 increased weekday screentime for children, finds study

April 12 2023



Credit: Marta Wave (Pexels)

The COVID-19 pandemic led to increased weekday screentime for school-aged children says a new study involving the University of Ottawa published in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Researchers examined the change in children's [screen time](#) from prior to the [pandemic](#) to three separate pandemic waves between 2020 and 2021. Researchers found a boost of up to 1.35 hours per day during the weekdays compared to prior to the pandemic, particularly with [school closures](#) at the onset of the pandemic.

While the weekend time was on par with pre-pandemic levels, this weekday jump was greater than expected for age-related growth.

"We were interested in understanding whether initial spikes in screen time among school aged children were sustained during the pandemic," explains Dr. Nicole Racine, the study's co-author, and Assistant Professor in the School of Psychology at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

"We found that the biggest increases in screen time occurred during weekdays at the outset of the pandemic during school closures. When school resumed, weekday screen time decreased, but remained higher than pre-pandemic estimates. These findings suggest that children used screens to fill time otherwise spent at school or participating in extra-curricular activities."

Dr. Racine is an ongoing collaborator with the [All Our Families Study](#) at the University of Calgary and she collaborated with researchers from the University of Laval and the University of Calgary on this study. Dr. Racine is also chair in child and youth [mental health](#) at CHEO and was part of the team behind [a recent study](#) showing a sharp increase in emergency department visits for attempted suicide and suicide ideation among children and adolescents during the pandemic.

More information: André Plamondon et al, Changes in Children's Recreational Screen Time During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.0393](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.0393)

Provided by University of Ottawa

Citation: COVID-19 increased weekday screentime for children, finds study (2023, April 12)
retrieved 3 February 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-04-covid-weekday-screentime-children.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.