

Parental setting of routines, limits, and child screen time during COVID-19: a cohort study.

Amanda Lien¹, Xuedi Li², Charles D.G. Keown-Stoneman^{3,4}, Katherine T. Cost⁵, Leigh M. Vanderloo^{6,7}, Sarah Carsley^{3,8}, Jonathon Maguire⁹⁻¹², Catherine S. Birken²

¹ Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto. ² Child Health Evaluative Sciences, SickKids Research Institute. ³ Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. ⁴ Applied Health Research Centre (AHRC), Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto. ⁵ The Hospital for Sick Children, Department of Psychiatry. ⁶ ParticipACTION, Toronto, Canada. ⁷ School of Occupational Therapy, Western University. ⁸ Department of Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Public Health Ontario. ⁹ Department of Paediatrics, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ¹⁰ Department of Nutritional Sciences, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ¹¹ Department of Pediatrics, St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ¹² Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ¹³ Division of Paediatric Medicine, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Introduction

- An increase in child screen time has been observed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (1)
- Home environment, parental characteristics, and parenting practices have been associated with child screen time (2-3)
- Few studies have been conducted on the longitudinal relationship between parental use of routines, limit setting, and child screen time during the COVID-19 pandemic

Objective

To examine the association between parental use of routines and setting limits with child screen time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

A cohort study was conducted in healthy children aged 0-11 years through the TARGet Kids! COVID-19 Study of Children and Families in Toronto, Canada between May 2020 and May 2021 (4). Exposures included parental use of routines and limits. Outcome was child daily screen time. Linear mixed-effects models were fitted using repeated measures of exposures and outcomes with a priori stratification by developmental stages (< 3, 3-4.99, ≥ 5 years) and controlled for various confounders.

Figure 1. Descriptive characteristics of the sample.

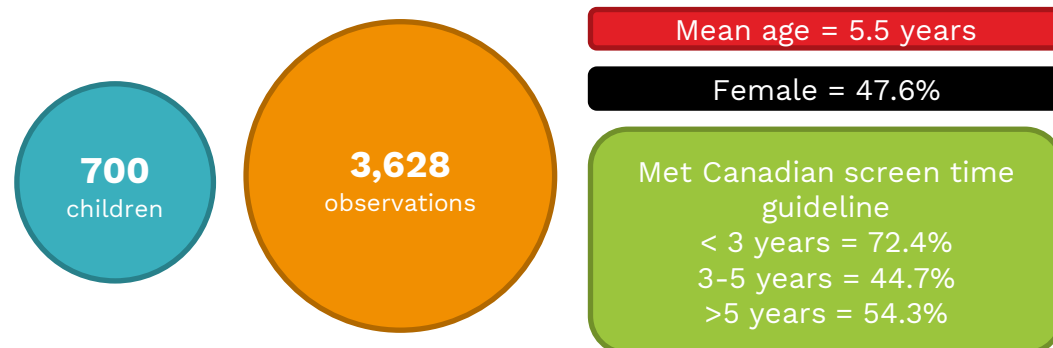
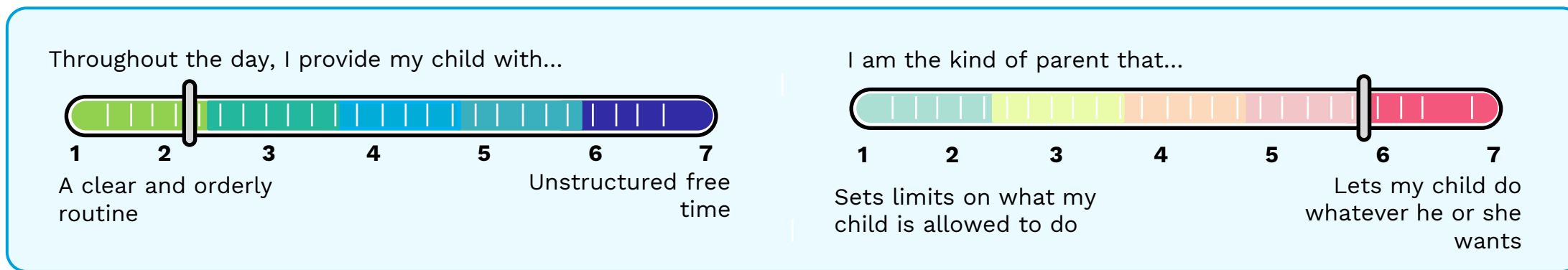


Figure 2. Exposure scales of parental use of routines and limits.



Results

Table 1. Bootstrapped mixed effects model of routines and child screen time.

	Unadjusted			Adjusted for covariates		
	B	95% CI	P-value	B	95% CI	P-value
< 3 years	3.37	-3.52, 9.17	0.36	4.61	-2.04, 10.39	0.16
3-4.99 years	2.65	-1.44, 7.28	0.26	2.10	-2.15, 6.28	0.36
≥ 5 years	4.84	1.50, 8.28	< 0.01	5.25	2.25, 8.73	< 0.01

Table 2. Bootstrapped mixed effects model of limits and child screen time.

	Unadjusted			Adjusted for covariates		
	B	95% CI	P-value	B	95% CI	P-value
< 3 years	3.26	-3.72, 8.65	0.41	3.41	-3.56, 8.86	0.39
3-4.99 years	0.88	-3.27, 5.82	0.77	0.03	-3.98, 4.82	0.99
≥ 5 years	2.70	-0.10, 5.34	0.05	3.30	0.52, 5.90	0.02

Conclusions

- ▶ Less routines and limits during the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with greater screen time among young children
- ▶ Routines and limits are actionable approaches to be considered in the development of public health strategies to promote healthful screen use in young children
- ▶ Our findings highlight implications to be considered in future health policy planning involving school and childcare closures

References

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