

[IMAGE]

## Teach Them Early

By Editorial Staff

We've talked on numerous occasions about the physical and mental health complications associated with our screen-time-overloaded world, so hopefully you've already initiated a few changes to help you and your family reduce their screen time. But what about young children? Unfortunately, despite recommendations from established health care organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, even kids ages 5 and younger appear to be at risk.

It's not just a U.S. problem, either. A recent review study suggests excess screen time among younger children is a *global* problem. Research involving 89,163 children shows only one in four (24.7 percent) of children younger than 2 years of age meet screen-time guidelines of one hour per day or less; only one in three (35.6 percent) of children ages 2-5 meet the guideline.

The problem may stem from the fact that, as the review authors state, "Children 5 years and younger are the fastest-growing users of digital media." That means we're teaching our children, right from the start, to devote too much of their time to the screen (tablets, TVs, computers, even mom or dad's cellphone) than is advised.

Any parent with older or adult children – or who's spent time reflecting on their *own* upbringing – understands the profound power of early learning. Teach your kids how to do things the right way, and you may have taught them a lifelong habit. Teach them how to do it the wrong way, and you / they could be in for trouble. It's no different with screen time. Set the standard early and often; *before* it's too late.

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