

## SHOW ME Facts:

2012-2013 Births

**78.7%**

Of Missouri toddlers watch TV regularly

**4.6%**

Of Missouri toddlers use PC or video games regularly

**20.9%**

Of Missouri toddlers use cell phones regularly

**25.6%**

Of Missouri toddlers who use tablets regularly

**15.8%**

Of Missouri toddlers do not use/watch electronic devices regularly

**1.4%**

Of Missouri toddlers do not have electronic devices in their households regularly

Studies show that too much screen time can be harmful, and today there are a lot more options for screen time than just watching television.<sup>1</sup> Too much time playing on a cell phone or tablet, watching YouTube, using Facebook, or anything else that has someone looking at a screen can cause health issues. For children, too much screen time can result in lowered reading skills and increased memory problems.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, children who have too much screen time may have trouble sleeping,<sup>3</sup> are more likely to be anxious or depressed, and more likely to struggle with their weight.<sup>1</sup>

There are several ways that too much screen time affects health. For instance, as a child's brain starts to develop, they watch their parents to learn how to speak and act. But when they are in front of a screen, children are no longer interacting with their parents or interacting with the world around them.<sup>4</sup> Without these early experiences, children may experience difficulty socializing, have lower self-esteem, and difficulty in school.<sup>5</sup>

There are several ways excess screen time can contribute to excess weight gain. First, screen time tends to involve a lot of sitting still, while physically active play is one of the most recommended ways to prevent weight problems. Secondly, people are more likely to passively eat foods high in fat and sugar while watching TV or playing video games. Finally, the foods that are advertised have a negative effect on youth food preferences. Together, these three things are a recipe for becoming overweight.<sup>1,6</sup>

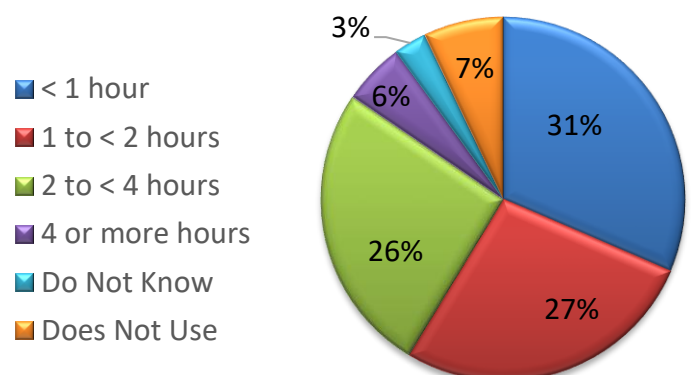
This brief uses data from the Missouri Child Health Assessment Program Survey (MoCHAPS) for two-year-olds born between 2008 and 2013 (data from 2009 unavailable). Mothers of two-year-olds were asked about their child's daily media usage, along with a variety of other questions.

### MISSOURI TODDLERS

When asked how many hours of TV their two-year-old watched on an average day, 90% of mothers responded that their child watched at least some television every day (Figure 1). Nearly one in three (31.4%) two-year-olds watched two or more hours of television daily.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours a day of screen time for teens, less than one hour a day for children ages two through twelve, and no screen time for children under two.<sup>5</sup> However, they do acknowledge that there is a difference between unsupervised screen time and screen time with an engaged parent where interaction occurs; as well as noting a difference between passive screen time and interactive uses such as Skype or Face Time.

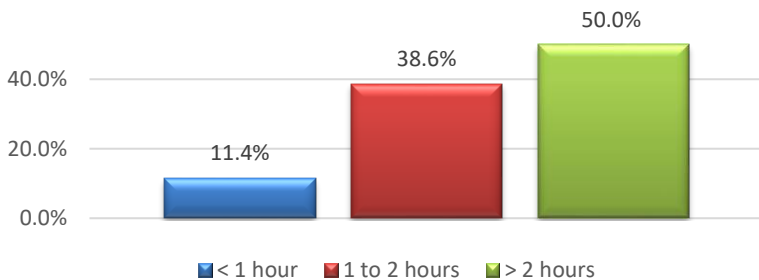
**Figure 1: Hours Child Watches TV**  
(2008 - 2013 births)



## ALTERNATIVES TO SCREEN TIME

There are a number of suggested alternatives to screen time. Perhaps the most frequently suggested option is unstructured physically active play. Parents and children playing together is also commonly recommended. Increasing physical activity helps address the inactivity associated with screen time. In addition to increasing physical activity, playing also may help improve eating habits, as some studies have found a connection between an improved diet and improved physical activity.<sup>7</sup> Additional benefits of physically active play include

**Figure 2. Hours of Physically Active Play (2010-2013 Births)**



interactions with adults, and with the physical world, that are important during early brain development. In Missouri, 38.6% of two-year-olds were physically active for at least one to two hours a day while 50.0% were physically active for more than two hours a day (Figure 2). Another commonly recommended substitute for screen time is time spent reading to the child.<sup>8</sup> More than 55% of Missouri toddlers have someone read to them every day, exceeding the Healthy People 2020 target of 52.6%.<sup>9</sup>

## MATERNAL CHARACTERISTICS

Mothers who reported that their toddler watched two or more hours of television daily more commonly:

- Unmarried (34.2%) than married (29.6%).
- Had a four-year college degree (30.3%) than had a four-year degree or higher (21.5%).
- Were Non-Hispanic Black (33.3%) than Non-Hispanic White (26.3%).
- Lived in homes with an annual household income below \$50,000 (36.5%) than above \$50,000 (21.0%).
- Told that their child was overweight (32.7%) than not (17.3%).
- Lived in rural counties (32.6%) than urban counties (30.7%).

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## ABOUT MoCHAPS

The Missouri Child Health Assessment Program Survey (MoCHAPS) is a two-year follow-up to the Missouri PRAMS survey funded by the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. MoCHAPS was developed in 2007 and has since been conducted annually, except for 2009. The objective of the survey is to assess the health of Missouri's toddlers and their quality of life from birth to two years of age. The MoCHAPS survey is sent to mothers drawn from those who completed the Missouri Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey when their children are two years of age. MoCHAPS collects data through three mailed survey batches, approximately 1,000 surveys each year. For 2010-2013 birth cohorts, the average weighted response rate was 47.25% (N=2,232). MoCHAPS data are weighted to be representative of all Missouri mothers with two-year-old toddlers.

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Missouri Child Health Assessment Program Survey (MoCHAPS)

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