



SCREEN TIME AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Dr. Rebecca Renegar, CFLE
Applied Research Lead, UT SWORPS

AGENDA

- Defining screen time
- Exploring research
- Potential Benefits of Screen Time
- Screen time recommendations and patterns
- Alternatives to screen time
- Family audit and planning
- Key Takeaways



WHAT IS SCREEN TIME?

**SCREEN TIME INCLUDES MANY
FORMS OF DIGITAL MEDIA:**

- TV
- Video games
- Computers
- Tablets
- Smart phones



YOU MIGHT THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS:

- Passive (TV)
- Interactive (some games)
- Communication (text, Zoom, email)
- Content Creation (class or computer work, art/media creation)



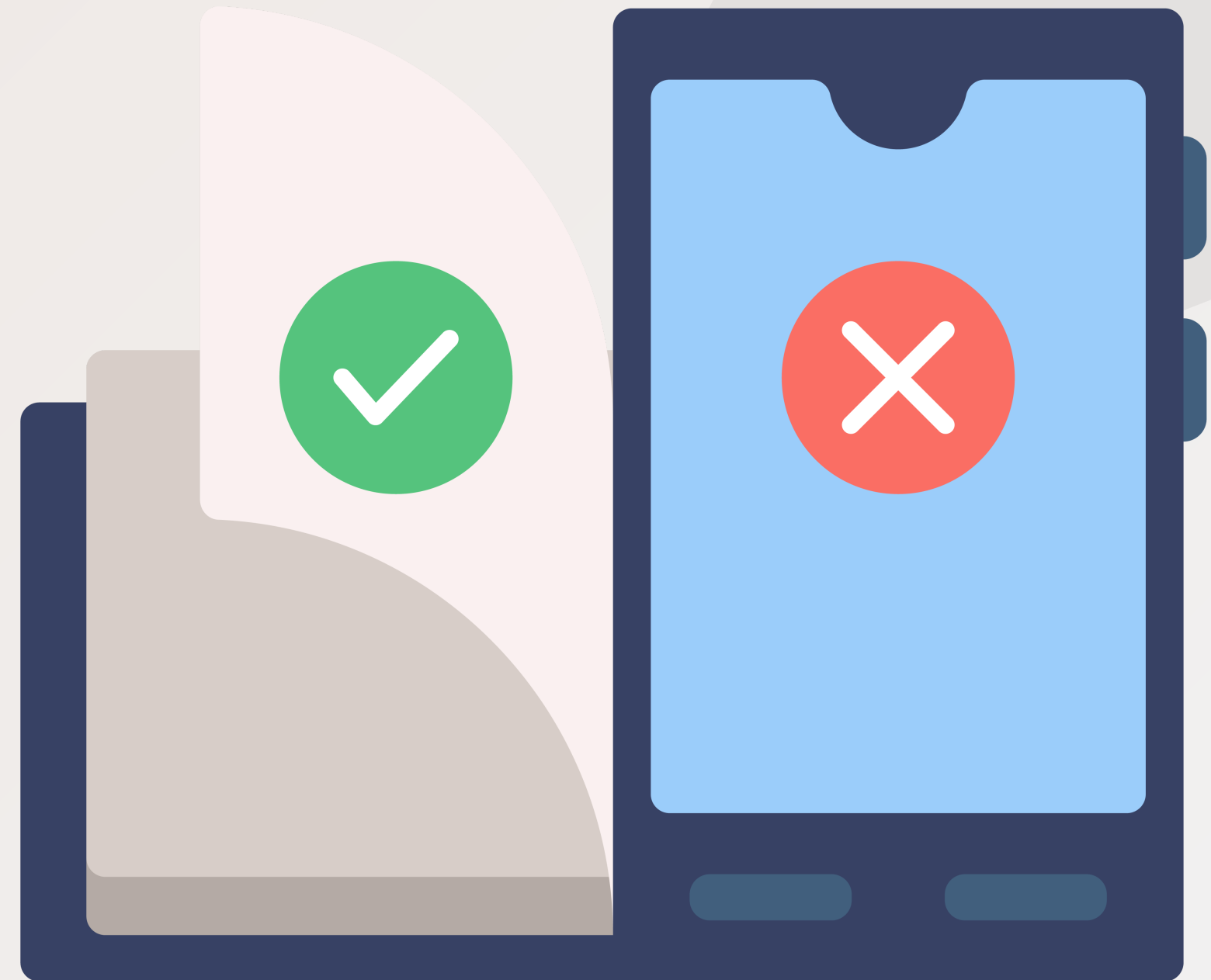
RESEARCH SAYS...

- A March 2026 meta-analysis (Teague et al.) showed positive and negative effects, which typically were stronger with a higher “dose” and most pronounced in early adolescence (ages 10–14)
- A 2025 CDC study found that higher screen time was associated with less physical activity, inadequate rest, higher depression, and less developed social networks.
- ”Technoference” combines the words technology and interference. This word was created to identify the interruption of family time due to technology. This includes interrupting attention to your child.



POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SCREEN TIME

- Education
- Downtime
- Socialization & Community
- Teamwork
- Mental stimulation
- Creativity
- Responsibility and decision making
- Provides an outlet/break for busy or overwhelmed parents



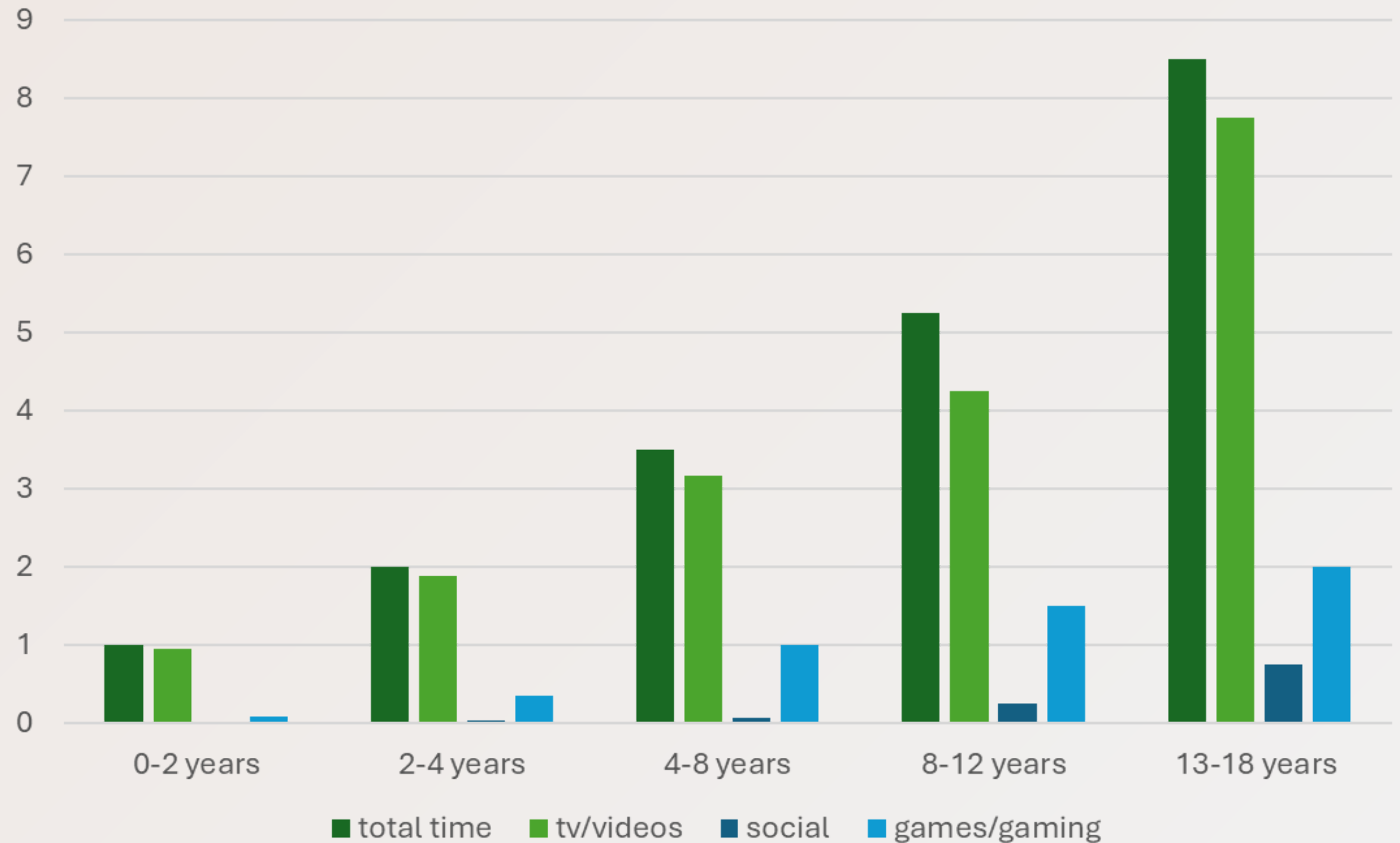
SCREEN TIME LIMITS OR ALLOWANCES

- Birth to 2 years: Under 1 no screen time; 1-2 none or very little – should be educational in nature
- 2-4 years: Not more than 1 hour per day, less is better
- 5-12 years: no more than 1-2 hours per day
- 13+ years: No more than 2 hours per day, avoid before bed
- Adults: 5-6 hours per day, with breaks to reduce health risks



SCREEN USE BY AGE AND TYPE

A 2021 survey by Common Sense Media explored different types of screen use: television, games, and short-videos



EXAMINING SCREEN TIME PATTERNS

**What is your screen use? Put it in
the chat!**



- Smart phones have excellent screen time tracking tools to help you understand and manage screen time
- Most used Apps or Websites
- What you look at upon “pickup”

REBECCA'S SCREEN TIME USE EXAMPLE

**RECENT SCREEN TIME USE IS ABOUT
3.5 HOURS PER DAY**

- 45 minutes a day on Social
- 20 minutes a day on Kindle
- 30 minutes on phone/messages *most frequent pickup
- 30 minutes a day on work-related activities
- 1+ hours on videos, Zillow, game changer, Amazon shopping



SCREEN TIME HABITS

- A source of social interaction and entertainment
- Platforms are designed to be habit-forming and addictive (dopamine/reinforcement).
- Social Learning (modeling good behavior)
- Social Norms vs. Intentionality



SCREEN TIME ALTERNATIVES



- Get outdoors (all ages)– free play, organized sports, nature walks
- Board games
- Crafts and creative activities
- Music (listen or play)
- Books (audio or hard copy)
- Dress up and imaginative play
- STEM and learning activities including puzzles
- Writing

FAMILY SCREEN TIME AUDITS AND DIGITAL PLANS



- Evaluate your family screen use
- Set goals and expectations
- Determine accountability and responsibility
- Prioritize safety and health
- Teach and model balance
- Start small or go big!
- Review and adjust, as needed

SIMPLE SWITCHES FOR BUSY FAMILIES

- Choose educational content over fluff
- Watch together, if possible
- Use built-in screen limits for all family members
- Turn off non-essential notifications & remove apps
- Name the screen purpose
- Set up one no-screen time or location (The dinner table is a great choice!)



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Set Realistic Goals
- Know why you are using it!
- Find the alternative?
- Build healthy habits as a family
- Model the behavior you want to see
- Be about balance



QUESTIONS?

