Parental Knowledge of Children’s Screen Time: The Role of Parent-Child Relationship and Communication

# Details

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English

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## Sample

854 students in grade 7, mean age 11.36 years

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Family and Children welfares, Public and private digital literacy initiatives

# Abstract

The ubiquity of media in children’s lives makes it increasingly difficult for parents to keep track of their children’s screen time, leading to considerable discrepancies in parent- and child-report. In the present study, we aimed to examine if and how these discrepancies can be explained by parent-child communication, in terms of children’s self-disclosure, secrecy, and parental solicitation, and to what extend the quality of the parent-child relationship can influence these communication patterns. We tested two structural equation models to investigate the absolute discrepancy between parent and child estimates of children’s screen time and parental underestimation, using dyadic data from 854 11-year-olds and their parents, in Switzerland. Our results showed that children’s self-disclosure and secrecy behaviors were significantly associated with parental knowledge, where the relationship between self-disclosure and parental knowledge of children’s screen time was the stronger among the two. Moreover, a good parent-child relationship, especially parents’ ability in perspective taking, was significantly related to increased self-disclosure and decreased secrecy behaviors by children.

# Outcome

The more children disclosed information about themselves and on their initiative, the smaller the discrepancy was in parent and child estimates of children’s screen time. Comparing overall discrepancy with parents’ underestimation of children’s screen time, we saw that self-disclosure particularly decreased parents’ underestimation of children’s screen time.