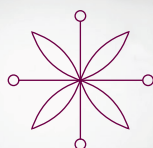


The Abstract Book of the 22nd European Conference on Developmental Psychology



August 25-29, 2025
Vilnius, Lithuania

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ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PRESCHOOLERS' LANGUAGE SKILLS AND SCREEN MEDIA TIME, TYPE, AND CONTENT

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Early years is an important and sensitive period for language development. Available data suggest that speech and language disorders are found in 15-25% of pre-school children, and these disorders are more common in boys, with three times as many delayed language development and twice as many speech and language disorders as in girls. During the past decades, modern family life is „saturated“ with technologies and various screen based media use, bringing in researchers' debates on the effects of it on child development. Thus, we aim to analyse the associations between screen-based media use, both duration, e.g., screen time, type of it (TV, PC, tablet, smartphone) and content (e.g., animation, games, short videos), and pre-schoolers' language skills.

Data coming from two samples of pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years old), gathered in year 2017 (N=563) and in year 2021 (N=260) were used in this study. Parents of children reported the child's screen use, speech problems and language skills.

Results show around 20 per cent of pre-schoolers (15% girls and 25% boys) have speech problems and almost one-fourth (15% girls and 30% boys) were rated by their parents as having less language skills than peers, with the comparable proportion in both samples. The less language skills and more speech problems were significantly related to longer screen time, and especially to TV viewing and using smartphones for viewing short videos. Results of multinomial regression analysis revealed that screen time was the main predictor in distinguishing children with better language skills in comparison to other pre-schoolers. Also, child gender and parental education were additional, but not permanent, predictors of language skills.

Discussion highlights the practical implications of the results and some methodological limitations, as well as the need for longitudinal studies in a field.