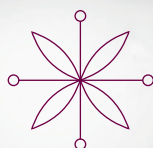


The Abstract Book of the 22nd European Conference on Developmental Psychology



August 25-29, 2025
Vilnius, Lithuania

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and whether they engage passively or actively with the content. Therefore, we take a comprehensive approach to investigating screen time and cognitive development. We measured two hundred 3- to 5-year-old Australian children's executive functions (EFs) using the Early Years Toolbox (<https://www.eytoolbox.com.au/>): visuo-spatial working memory, attention shifting, and inhibition. How much screen time predicts EFs and whether it interacts with sleep, content type, and interaction levels will be discussed.

PRESCHOOLERS' USE OF DIFFERENT SCREEN-BASED DEVICES AND ITS RELATION TO THEIR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: INSIGHTS BASED ON EF TASKS AND REPORTS FROM PARENTS AND TEACHERS

**Lauryna Rakickienė, Rugilė Vaitkūnaitė, Roma Jusienė,
Ramunė Dirvanskienė, Rima Breidokienė**

Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Lithuania

The rapid growth of digital technology has sparked global concerns about its effects on young children's cognitive development. While a recent meta-analysis found no relationship between overall parent-reported screen time and executive functions (Bustamante et al., 2023), researchers acknowledge that evidence remains inconclusive and call for further studies that consider contextual factors of screen use, such as content type, device type, age of onset and activities during screen-free time (Huber et al., 2018; Lakicevic et al., 2025). Additionally, methodological challenges in measuring executive functions (EFs) may contribute to inconsistent findings. On the one hand, "pure" EF tasks for young children are difficult to design, as performance is heavily influenced by developing language and reasoning. On the other hand, strictly controlled lab tasks may lack ecological validity, given the ultimate goal of understanding the effects of digital technology on children's real-life functioning.

This recent study examined the relationship between preschool children's screen use and executive functions, assessed both by lab tasks and parent and teacher reports. The Shape School, Missing Scan, and Head and Feet tasks were administered to 101 preschoolers (55.4% female; $M = 59.65$ months, $SD = 6.55$) to assess set shifting, working memory, and inhibitory control. Parents reported children's daily screen use across different devices and provided contextual information on screen use. Additionally, parents and preschool teachers of 68 children completed a short EF difficulties scale developed by the authors of this study. We hypothesize that screen time will correlate more strongly with parent- and teacher-reported EF difficulties in daily life than with task performance, with effects varying by device type and screen use context.