



SCREEN TIME OF 2 to 8 YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN FOUR REGIONS IN ALASKA:

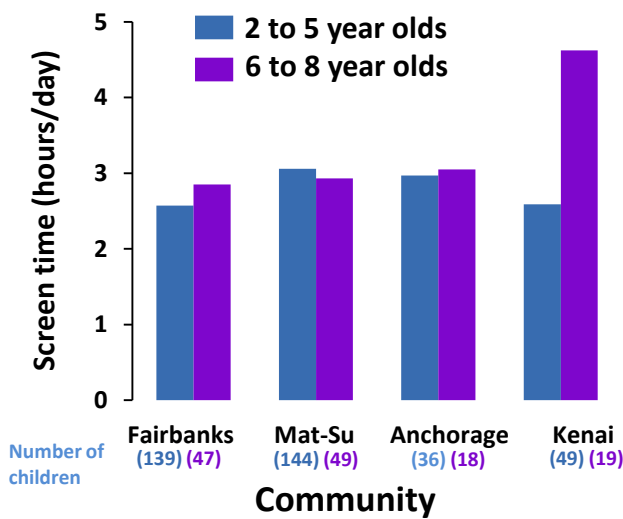
Baseline findings from the Children's Healthy Living Program

Screen time includes all time spent in front of a screen doing things like watching TV, using social media, browsing the internet, or playing videogames.

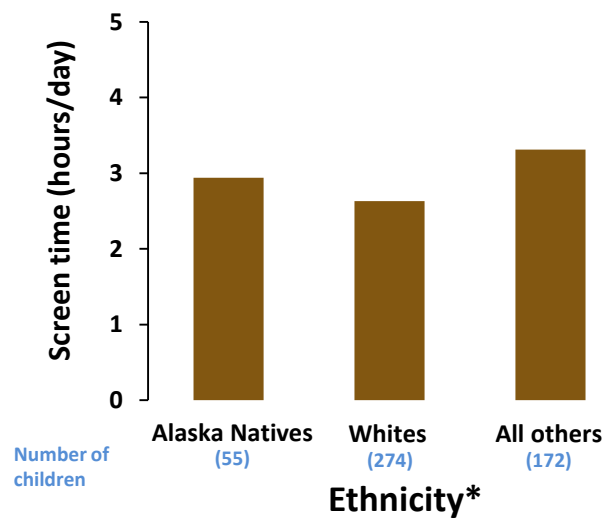
Who participated in our study and what did we measure?

- Between 2012-14 CHL collected information about screen time from 501 children in four regions of Alaska: Fairbanks, the Matanuska-Susitna valley (Mat-Su), Anchorage, and communities throughout the Kenai Peninsula.
- Families estimated the amount of time their children spent doing things like watching TV or playing videogames in a typical week.

Hours of Screen Time, by community



Hours of Screen Time, by ethnicity

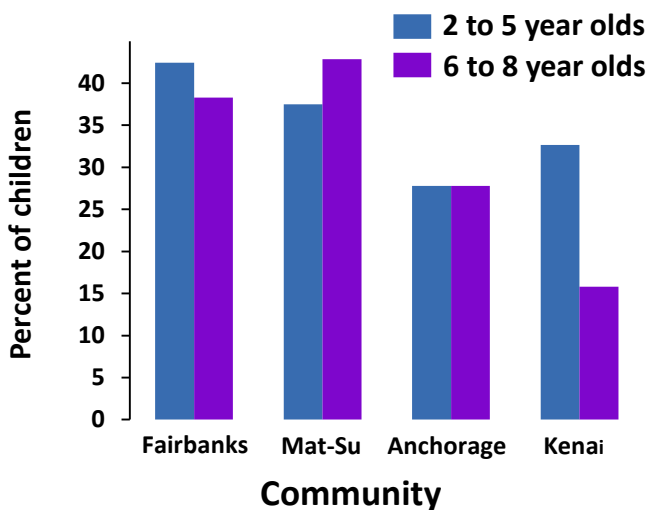


The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends limiting entertainment screen time to **less than 2 hours per day** for children 2 years old or older¹.

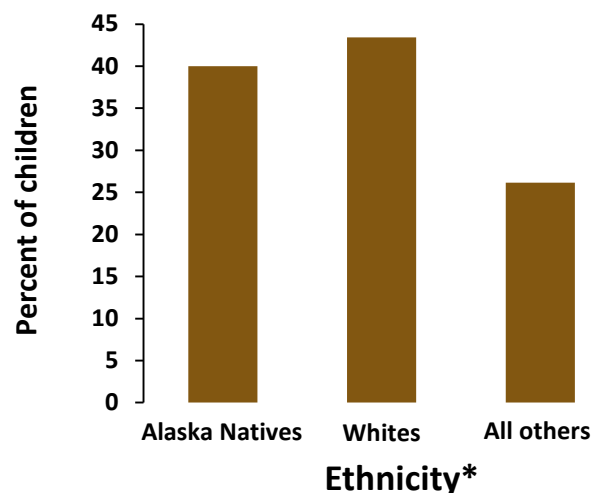
In the CHL Program:

- 2 to 8 year olds averaged 2.9 hours of screen time per day.
- 37.1% of 2 to 8 year olds used a screen < 2 hours per day (recommended).

Percent of children using a screen for <2 hours per day, by community



Percent of children using a screen for < 2 hours per day, by ethnicity



*Participants were classified as Alaska Native or White only if they self identified as this and no other race was reported.

How does time spent in front of a screen affect children's health?

Excessive screen time can:

- **Increase the chance of a child becoming overweight or obese** ^{2,3}
- **Reduce how much a child sleeps:** Using screens at bed time may delay when a child goes to sleep, make it difficult to fall asleep, and change natural sleep cycles because light from screens reduces the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps induce sleep ^{4,5}
- **Take time away from other activities, such as reading and homework, and decrease performance at school** ^{6,7}
- **Increase a suite of characteristics including high blood pressure and high cholesterol that are risk factors for heart attacks, stroke, and diabetes** ⁸
- **Reduce a child's sense of self esteem** ²
- **Change behavior and possibly lead to increased levels of aggression** ^{9,10}
- **Reduce non-verbal communication skills** ¹¹
- **Reduce physical fitness** ²

What can individuals and communities do to promote physical activity in Alaskan Children?

- **Create tech-free zones:**
 - Make sure there are no TV's, mobile devices, computers, or videogames in a child's bedroom, especially at bedtime
 - Have mobile devices go to a charging station or other location outside of the bedroom before children go to bed.
 - Don't use screens before school
 - Turn the TV off at mealtimes
 - Try re-arranging the furniture so the TV is not the focus of a room
- **Set limits and encourage playtime.** Technology use, like other activities, should have reasonable limits.
- **Provide alternatives to electronics when kids get bored:** Have activity kits ready to engage your child. Kits could include games, crafts, a rotating collection of books, or things to encourage active play like jump ropes and balls.

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