

Book reading and screentime for toddlers with communication concerns

Kate Short^{1,2,3}, Georgina Hawling¹ Brooke Butt¹ Elise Baker^{1,2,3,4}

¹South Western Sydney Local Health District, Liverpool, Australia; ²School of Health Sciences, Western Sydney University, Australia ³Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, Liverpool, Australia; ⁴Transforming Early Education and Child Health (TeEACH) Research Centre, Western Sydney University, Westmead, Australia.

THE PROBLEM

I'm not talking yet. My friend says 270 words¹. I'm at risk for having ongoing struggles with communication, reading, making friends, and my mental health when I go to school². Screens take away time for my parents to talk with me and help me learn to talk³. Book reading with my family helps me learn to talk and learn⁴

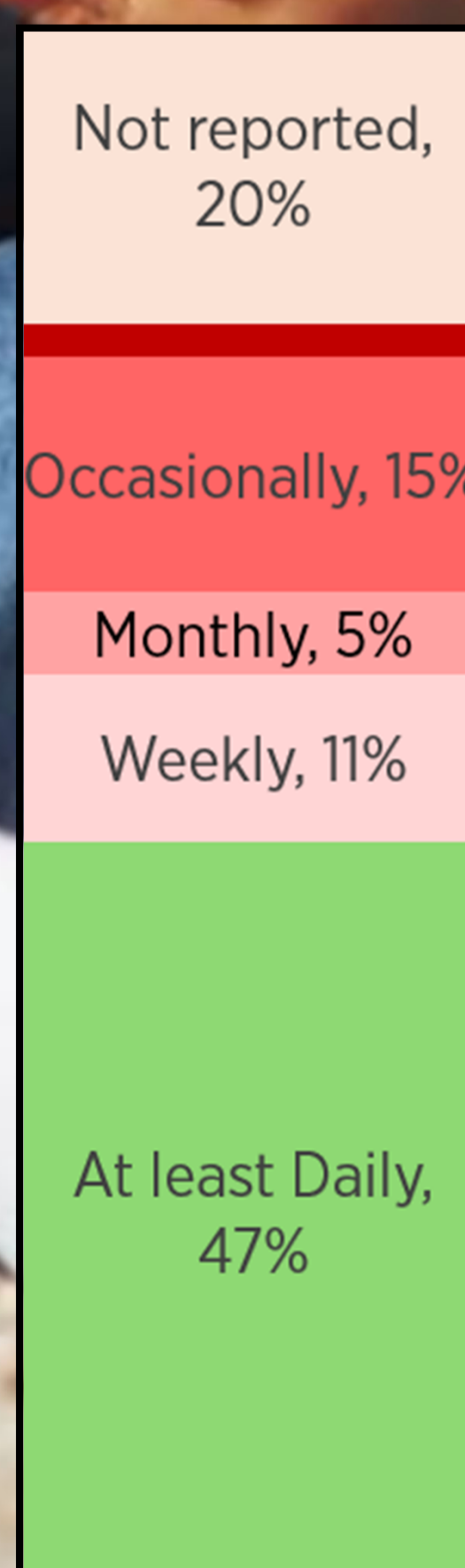
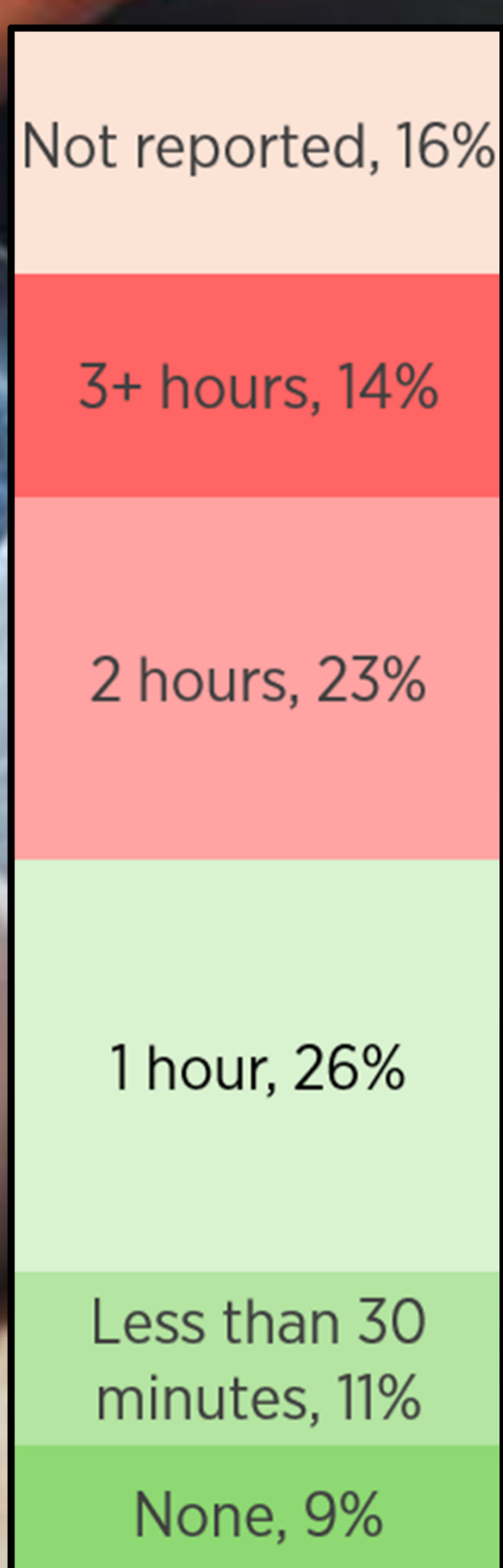
AIM 1

Speech pathologists at Liverpool Hospital and researchers from Western Sydney University did a project to describe the frequency of parent-child book reading and screentime for toddlers like me with communication concerns.

AIM 2

The team also wanted to determine which child- and/or family characteristics (child age, sex, communication ability; parent level of education, multilingual status) influenced parent-reported book reading and screentime practices

Toddlers' daily screentime use



Not yet read books with toddler

Parent-toddler book reading frequency

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

- **What factors influenced book reading?** Logistic regression model was statistically significant ($\chi^2(5) = 12.39, p < .03; R^2 = 0.16$). Factors significantly influencing the model were age ($\beta = 0.113, p = .034$) and multilingual status ($\beta = -0.367, p = .024$)— Parents of young toddlers and multilingual families reported reading less, regardless of parent level of education.
- **What factors influenced screentime?** Logistic regression model was not significant ($\chi^2(5) = 8.41, p < 0.14; R^2 = 0.11$). Screentime was high irrespective of child or family characteristics.
- **Key finding:** 1 in 2 families worried about their toddlers talking, did not read books daily with their toddler; 3 out of 4 toddlers engaged in screentime above government recommendations⁵.
- **Implications:** Early intervention for toddlers with communication concerns needs to partner with parents to address management of screen time and prioritize quality daily book reading if toddlers are to develop optimal communication and interaction skills.

REFERENCES

- ¹Kalashnikova, M., Schwarz, J. C., & Burnham, D. (2016). OZ1: Australian English communicative development inventory. *First Language, 36*(4), 407-427.
- ²Matte-Landry, A., Boivin, M., Tanguay-Garneau, L., Mimeau, C., Brendgen, M., Vitaro, F., ... & Dionne, G. (2020). Children with persistent versus transient early language delay: Language, academic, and psychosocial outcomes in elementary school. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 63*(11), 3760-3774.
- ³Karani, N. F., Sher, J., & Mophosho, M. (2022). The influence of screen time on children's language development: A scoping review. *South African Journal of Communication Disorders, 69*(1), 825.
- ⁴Suttora, C., Zucchini, M., Acceti, A., Corvaglia, L., Guarini, A., & Sansavini, A. (2021). The effects of a parent-implemented language intervention on late-talkers' expressive skills: The mediational role of parental speech contingency and dialogic reading abilities. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 723366.
- ⁵Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care - Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians-for-infants-toddlers-and-preschoolers-birth-to-5-years>

This project was supported by a funding from a Speech Pathology Australia Clinician-Researcher Grant



South Western Sydney Local Health District

