This unedited transcript of a SpeechPathology.com webinar is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility for the viewer and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings. This transcript may contain errors. Copying or distributing this transcript without the express written consent of SpeechPathology.com is strictly prohibited. For any questions, please contact customerservice@SpeechPathology.com.

Screen Time: Supporting Young Children and Their Families in the Digital Age

Recorded June 25, 2019

Presenter: Stacey Landberg, MS, CCC-SLP

SpeechPathology.com Course #8944

- [Amy] Once again, welcome to our webinar today, Screen-Time: Supporting Young Children and Their Families in the Digital Age. Our presenter today is Stacey Landberg. She is a pediatric SLP, with 14 years of professional experience, after earning her early intervention credential in Chicago in 2007, Stacey returned to L.A. where she has since specialized in home-based early intervention. Despite the vast ethnic and socioeconomic diversity among her clients, Stacey noticed one striking similarity, every caregiver has questions and concerns about their child's media consumption. Prompted by these questions and Stacey's own vested interest as a mother to two young children. She began a detailed analysis of the research related to screen-time for young children in 2012. Her studies have allowed her to meet and consult with national, and international experts on this topic, to write parent training materials for app developers, and educate more than 900 media mentors across the United States.

- [Stacey] Great to be Here. Thank you for the introduction. And number one is that you'll be able to list four areas of consideration, when making recommendations to families concerning screen-time. Two, we'll be able to describe the key features of joint media engagement, and when professionals might make this as a recommendation to all families, or recommendation to certain families. And three that we'll be able to explain how visual perception, and attention to 2D media develops from birth to age five. And I do receive funds to conduct today's professional development course. and I just always wanna give a special thanks, to just know that I am not a researcher. So the presentation that I'm bringing you today would not be possible without the help and support of these specific researchers and professors, who have all played a big part of this. So I'd just like to start with a little bit of background. So for me in 2011 this happened, I became a mom. And then in 2012 I became a mom again. And very quickly, my hands were very full and I realized at this moment home with my babies being so close in age that, I just, you know, when I realized how grateful I was. I didn't have, I had already been working in early intervention for a number of years going in

home, throughout Los Angeles and I was frequently giving the standard recommendation to parents, that we need to limit screen-time for under two. That all these other developmental activities in play, and all of these things were still important. And then I found myself in a situation where I was completely exhausted all the time. I had pretty severe postpartum depression. But I also had a support network, I wasn't struggling the way many of the families that I was working with were, in other aspects as far as relationships and socioeconomic status, and all of these other things. And then I also did not have concerns with my children's development. And yet I was still struggling. I was struggling to figure out, how do I do this? How do I take care of these two little humans and myself at the same time without a screen?

And so at this point of my life and in my career, a lot of things shifted and changed, which I think a lot of people working in child development also can relate to once, once you kind of have different experiences with your own children, or other children in your lives that, sometimes you have a big shift. And that's what happened for me. So I wanted to know, I just became kind of really focused on the research, and wanting to know why, what happens at age two, that all of a sudden we're able to say, children and babies can now have screen-time. Like what's going on in the brain, what suddenly shifts. Everything that I know about child development tells me that different children all developed differently. And why is this just a set across the rule bar that at age two we can start allowing screen-time, and this was at that time, we know, now know that the American Academy of Pediatrics has even decreased that to 18 months, and even younger for kids to do video chat.

But I had all of these questions. So I really dove deep and I started contacting researchers. I wanted to know like, what happens in the child's brain, and I kinda became fixated on it for awhile. But it really made me passionate to share this information with others, and to also share with families in a way that's meaningful for them, and that builds off for their strengths. So I'm just a huge proponent for strengths-based approaches to intervention, especially in early intervention. So let's do a little bit

of just check in. So this is the, the American Academy of Pediatrics has the most widely cited position statement on screen-time. And we know the old position statement was 16 years that they said. From 1999 to 2015 they discouraged screen-time for children under age two. And then they did a bunch of this research, they brought all these scientists together, and researchers, and they publish something called Beyond Turn it Off, in October of 2015, in their news magazine. It was basically saying, "we realize that our current position statement "is lagging behind policy research, "and the pace of technology." So they updated their position statement, and there's a link there so you'll see that if you wanna read more about it. But here's the highlights.

Basically they said, "We recommend that parents "view with their children. "We recommend keeping screens out of bedrooms, "setting limits when it comes to how much time "or the content that the child's watching. "And we still recommend that we limit screen-time, "that we have no screen-time for kids under 18 months "except for video chat. "And for kids older than age two, "we're saying less than an hour per day." And then one of the things that I feel like when we cite this like new recommendation, we often don't talk about this big recommendation that they had, which was families need to be educated about screen-time. So my question for you is how likely are pediatricians to talk about screen-time with parents? And for me, my children because of different health insurance changes, we went through multiple different pediatricians when they were very young.

And no one ever brought it up to me ever. And I thought, wow, this is part of their like new position statement, which came out after my babies were babies, but you know, this idea we need to educate parents, but it just didn't seem to be happening. So what we know from the most current surveys is that only 16% of pediatricians actually talk to families about their media use with their children, their children's media use and as a family. And what those surveys also found was that, pediatricians who were most likely to restrict their own screens-time, we're more likely to talk to parents and have this

conversation with parents. But if pediatricians kind of had a lot of screen-times themselves, then they would be less likely to have this conversation with parents during well-check visits. Yeah, I just basically said that. So let's talk about this idea of media mentorship. So this is kind of this going along those lines of educating parents. So what is media mentorship? It's just a relationship in which a person with more experience, or more knowledge about screen-time helps to guide a less experienced, or less knowledgeable person.

And this idea first started being talked about in 2014 by Lisa Guernsey. And so you can look for that Ted Talk, but she's basically saying, and then her colleague, Dr Chip Donohue at the Erickson Center, I'm sorry, at the TEC Center in Chicago says, "Every child needs a media mentor. "Every parent and family needs a media mentor. "And every librarian "and educator needs to be a media mentor." And when I started having all of this interest in reading, in conversations, I was interviewed on this topic with Lisa Guernsey and she asked me, "Where are you at in this process? "You've reached out, you have all these questions." And I said, I feel like I'm in a position to educate these families. I realize many pediatricians aren't doing it, but how do I get the information myself? And that was really a gap that they realized is we're saying we need to educate people, but we're not, where's the training at? And so that's sort of how this course was born. I have done this course as a six hour, today you're just getting a quick snippet, but I tried to include just the most, some of the most helpful things from other audiences.

But the idea is that those of us especially working with young children, are often in a position where we can provide some knowledge training guidance to parents, but we need to feel that we also have that, the background information to share with them that's appropriate, relevant. And this is such a hot topic. People have really passionate views about it. And that's one of the things that's cool about it is everyone has something to say about it, and it's not necessarily always about changing, or challenging someone else's perspective as it is about understanding each other. So,

yeah, so I think it'll be interesting to see how maybe others or those of you watching today might be able to use this information, to be media mentors to parents. So the goals of media mentorship are basically to identify and understand parents current perspectives about screen-time, their own family practices. We're basically looking for a baseline like what's currently happening.

And then if possible to change or broaden a caregiver's perspectives, and behaviors with media as needed, as wanted, depending on the family. And then also to be media mentors to parents so that they can hopefully be media mentors to their own children as well. The idea for me, is how do I empower parents to make choices that they feel good about, and that they can be successful with? And I really liked this article because what they found was, when parents were surveyed, most indicated they actually want this guidance from experts on media consumption for their children. And that, that desire for media mentorship was expressed at a higher percentage among low income and minority parents.

So oftentimes I start the conversation with parents, like really, openly like, do you wanna talk about this? Do you have questions? It's not always how I started the conversation, 'cause from what you'll hear from me today, I really find that we have to individualize this media mentorship, unique for every single family. It's not gonna be the same. And then I started thinking, well, does this media mentorship thing that I'm trying to do, does it even work with families? So I started taking my own data. So in 2016, I saw 58 children who were 18 to 33 months old, and these were all home visits. So this is the demographics you can see that the majority of children that I was working with and the families were Hispanic. Of those 58, six of the families intentionally limited screen-time to under two hours per week, for these children under 30, between 18 and 33 months of age. All six of these of the families who were limiting screen-time were white and middle to upper class. 18 children of the 58 average three or more hours of screen-time daily, between those ages, 18 to 33 months. Some up to 10 hours daily. And that parents own, what the parents told me like, well, we just have

the TV on all day. We don't really leave the house, it's on. So they would consider it just being like on constantly. Of those 18 children, 11 were at the low income to poverty level and 17 of the 18 were Hispanic.

So does it work? Of the 18 children who had three or more hours of screen-time per day, I provided direct media mentorship to caregivers. So we talked about this, we had conversations about it. We came up with strategies, of which to either encourage other things to fill up their day. So it was individualized to each family. But we did explicitly target this whole concept of media mentorship. Nine of the 18 families made significant screen-time changes. Primarily, they reported that they restricted use or they changed, or monitor the content that their child was watching. Three of the 18 families spontaneously reported on their own, that they felt their child's language milestones, and or their behaviors was improving due to the reduction in screen-time. So that was just parent report.

Again, this isn't like a scientific study. I didn't have funding to do this. It was just my own curiosity in data collection. But what I thought about was how are these numbers, and I have to say that like I was really discouraged by this data. I thought, okay, some of these kids really have a lot of screen-time. They have language delays, which is why they're seeing me and or other more serious kinds of developmental disabilities. We're having this conversation parents are trying to make changes, but really only nine of the families made changes. So I didn't really feel that empowered by this data. And when I've had this conversation with so many different people in child development, so many different SLPs, one of the things that I keep coming back to is the fact that these kids were 18 to 33 months of age. And by the time I got in the picture, which at least here in Los Angeles, most of the time early intervention is rarely started with a speech pathologist until at least 18 months. So by the time I got in the picture, a lot of these screen-time behaviors and habits were really, already in place and already solidified. So it's like, this is where I start thinking about us as SLPs working at the top of our license and being like, okay, how are we gonna educate other? Because I can't get to

these babies at four months of age, which is when the average American baby now starts screen-time is at age four months.

But a lot of my colleagues can, a lot of people working in child development, pediatricians, even OTs and PTs will often start with my clients much younger than when I can get to them. And so I've kind of made it a goal for myself of outreach so that we can start having this conversation. My dream would be, at the OBS office when these parents are, are pregnant because, so I'm sure you guys have, also experienced this when you're working with families, and parents will share, they'll have a child who's like 15 or 13, and then they'll have their next baby and the baby's like one or two, and they'll say, oh, it was so easier with the first one when we didn't have the, the tablets. So I think what happens is a lot of times it's really hard to stop the screen-time once you've started, it is what most parents tell me.

And I could see that. So I think these numbers could possibly be better if I could get this information to parents earlier. So let's talk about the four C's, 'cause these are the different areas that we would be ideally providing our media mentorship around. A lot of this is really common sense stuff. And so I'm gonna go through this part rather quickly, but we have first the three C's that Lisa Guernsey talked about first in 2012. So that's looking at the content, what's on the screen, the context and the individual child. And we'll go into those a little bit more. And so I said, well, Lisa, don't forget, we also have caregivers, so we're gonna talk about that too. But there's been a big push in the last two years, about looking at caregiver's own behaviors surrounding screen-time, and how that influences children as well. So the content is literally just what's on the screen. So looking at the content, is it developmentally appropriate? Is it adult-directed? Is it the news? Is it something that could be scary to a child? And what we know about the content is that, there's magazine format, which is like flipping through a magazine.

So think of like your typical Baby Einstein where one picture doesn't really relate to the next picture, it might be an ad on one page, or it might be a puppet, and then a farm, and then this and then that. And then your narrative format is gonna be like your typical storyline. So for example, most of your preschool programming is gonna be like a storyline sequence. And what the researchers have found over the years is that, this narrative format is associated with better language outcomes. We know that those types of Baby Einstein videos and things were, didn't really have any true evidence to support that they could have any benefit for a child's education. And then formal features.

So this is the rapid pacing, background music, those bright colors, the movement, the panning. This is all the camera effects, zooms, pans, the visual, the audio effects, these kinds of things. What we know for sure is that they keep young children's attention to a screen, but it also makes it really hard for kids to understand what's happening, especially when the pacing is so rapid. And historically our scenes are getting shorter. So when you watch a show, and then let's just say you're watching a movie of the Three Little Pigs, and the wolf climbs to the, up to the roof, the wolf climbs to the roof and then cuts to a next scene of the wolf going down through the chimney, right? So those scene lengths over time, historically have been getting much shorter. And there's this very interesting database where you can look up different movies to see what the average scene length is of different movies. So this is what it stands for Average Shot Length, or Average Scene Length before we cut to another scene. So in 1971, we had Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. And then in 2005, we had Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The average scene length or shot length for Willy Wonka was seven seconds, before there was a cut to the new scene. And Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the scene length is only three seconds. So, the movies only deferred in their length by five minutes long.

So Willy Wonka was five minutes shorter, and it had 844 different shots, or different scenes. But Charlie and the Chocolate Factory had more than double, 2091 shots. So

the pacing is just becoming more and more rapid over time. So new and old research supports intentionally limiting the number of scenes in children's media. So we're using these formal features, this rapid pacing, this background music, all of these visual and sound effects. Even though the researchers say, that makes it really hard for children to understand what they're seeing on a screen. So this rapid pacing is, and you know now with things like, some of the newest movies, and things that kids are watching the scene length is really, really short. It's less than two seconds sometimes.

Okay, so I just like to share, cause parents will ask me, well what are some things better choices? We're not gonna cut screen-time out 100%. That's not realistic for our families. And I try to be really understanding with families and to just meet them where they are. So when they ask me for recommendations of something better, than perhaps the Spider-Man show that their 18 month old is watching, I give them some different recommendations, and these are just the ones that I would share with you today. These have very few formal features. Most of them need to be watched on YouTube. I think Mr. Rogers you can get on prime, Amazon Prime. But anyways, they're just things that where the pacing is much slower, they would be better choices, they're real, they're more real lifelike. Playschool is a show that's been running for many years out of Australia. And so I've really have to say that's one of my top choices. It's just the pacing is really slow. They're real people. It's just seems a little bit more, it's just a better choice for a lot of families. So the second C is the context, which is talking about who, when, where, and how much screen-time? So we're thinking about who the child is with when they're watching, or who they're not with. Are they watching in the morning? Are they watching before naps? Are they watching it bedtime? Are they watching during therapy? And then also where is the screen-time taking place? Is it only in the living room with the family? Is it in the car? Is it taking place everywhere? Or more realistically when and where is it not taking place? If you identify where it's not taking place, that's another way to build family strengths. So you can have that conversation, but like, oh, I noticed that. When this is happening, they're not interested in the screen. I wonder how we could incorporate that somewhere else. I

just always think back to when I first started having this conversation with parents. So six to 36 month old, average one to two hours of screen-time daily. That's one of the estimates that we see in the surveys. And so when I first would have these conversations with parents, I would always say, how much screen-time do they have a day? How much screen-time? And for one, we don't ask parents these other questions, we ask them things like, developmentally we might ask like, oh, are they walking yet? Like are they reaching, are they pointing? Can they do this? Can they do that?

So I just list some examples. We might ask a parent like, does your child wipe his own nose or cover his mouth? But we wouldn't necessarily say, how much time does your child spend wiping his nose each day? So I've just learned the hard way that it doesn't really make sense to ask parents, how much screen-time does your child have? Because I don't think parents have ever answered me honestly. Maybe, maybe once in a while. But it also, I feel like creates a conversation that's apparent from my experience, often feels guilty immediately. And instead of building this like warm trust with a family, or going into their home, they just immediately, it builds a conversation around either a feeling of guilt, or judgment that I just don't wanna put on a parent. So I've learned to kind of take that question of how much out of my repertoire with families, and I just focus on other types of conversations surrounding screen-time again. And then eventually once I've built that trust, it's really easy to have a conversation about limiting time or changing content. Some interesting things about population changes. So in 2010, we had in the US a higher population of children and a smaller population of elderly. We're anticipating drastic population changes up till 2015. So most countries can experience can anticipate that by 2015, we will have a higher senior citizen population, and a lower population of children. Of course, because people are living longer. More and more people are choosing not to have children, or to have one child. And so, knowing that these people are living longer, what I definitely experienced in Los Angeles is that, more and more kids are being raised by grandparents. Childcare's astronomical here.

So it's very common for me to do home visits with grandparents. 10% of US children live with the grandparents, and 2.7 million grandparents are raising their grandchildren and that's 2014. So the reason I bring this up is because, the more senior populations according to the statistics, have more screen-time. So adults between 50 to 64 years of age averaged 43 hours of TV per week. And again, that's oftentimes it's just on, it's just like the background, on all the time. And even more adults, 65 and older, averaging 51 hours per week. And so a lot of the families whose homes I go into, it's just, me and doing some work with the family and I just notice the TV as often just on in the background. And I don't think I go into the studies about background TV because they've been so widely discussed at this point. But I can always send someone more information if they were curious.

So then we're talking about, we're still talking about the four Cs, so now we're gonna move onto the child. So, like I said before, the average child in the US start screen-time at four months of age now. And this is something I never really need to talk to SLPs much about, because we do it intuitively. I think it's just our training, but we often consider the individual child, and that each child is gonna have a different environment, different developmental levels, different experiences, different exposure and different circumstances. So I just, I mentioned this because that means that our recommendations are gonna need to be different for each child as well. What we know is that Latino children, according to the surveys, do you spend more time viewing TV compared to white children? 91% of families at the poverty level do have Internet access. So we're not really thinking that this is an access issue. Most families have Internet access. 83% own tablets. I would see these numbers are probably higher, but I haven't seen more recent surveys published. 77% have smartphones as of 2016. And then getting to our fourth C. So the individual caregivers, moms who had higher education levels were more likely to restrict screen-time.

This is dated, but it's something I certainly see, and experience with the families that I work with. And then another interesting study found that moms who prefer to use Spanish maybe less likely to watch TV with their children, or instruct them during screen-time. And if you look a little closer at those surveys, they said, well, it's because the moms often feel that their child is learning English when they're watching TV. So then they keep that as a separate activity. So our work when it comes to providing media mentorship is gonna be impacted by caregiver's own beliefs. So how they feel individually about screen-time. And I'll just say to that, that's the same for me. So my work is providing this information to parents, but also providing it to other SLPs and people who work with young children.

And I realize that what I'm sharing with you is, perceived a certain way based on how you feel about this topic yourself. Oftentimes I'm preaching to the choir. So it seems like a lot of people might feel this similarly to how I feel about it, but it's really not so important about as how I feel about it as how I, support parents in their task of raising children in the digital age. I just like to mention that a lot of researchers and peoples doing these studies have said repeatedly that, children, parents tasked with raising Generation Alphas, or digital natives, or whatever you wanna call this generation who basically grows up with screens around them, all over the place, all day, everyday. That this is like the greatest new challenge for these caregivers. Then no other generation really had to deal with or experienced in the way that they are. And it's certainly a challenge and it is not a challenge that goes away. My work is only really focused on the birth to three and a little bit older population, but this is certainly a huge, even maybe perhaps a bigger topic for teens with all the social media. So it's something that, to me it's really important to start having this conversation with parents early, because it just doesn't seem like it's something that's going away. So yes, our work will be affected by their own beliefs, their priorities, their own behaviors with screens. And again, some studies just looking at parents own behaviors.

So a lot of moms do multitask during bottle feedings with TV being the most common activity. And so parents own screen behavior is strongly associated with their children. So the more a parent is on their own phone or watching TV, the more likely a child's, a child might have more screen-time compared to another child. This is this new research direction where we're not really looking about how the screen-time impacts child development, we're looking more about how the parents devices, or interruptions, or distractions that are affecting child development.

So for example, two year olds, this is a more recent study, but two year olds did not learn new words from parents, when interacting with their parents, if that interaction was interrupted by a cell phone. So they did this study. They had a cell phone in a room go off when a parent was trying to teach their child about a new object, and then when they tested the children, the children who learned the name of the new object were the kids who didn't have the cell phone go off and interrupt the learning. The children who were interrupted were less likely to learn the new word. And I include the links in case you want to read about these studies more.

The second study is just talking about parents own device use and the association with tantrums in three year olds. So this is based on parent report, but parents reported that their children, the parents who had reported more screen-time on their own parts, also reported worse behavior, or more tantrums in their three year olds. So this is just to share that this is basically the focus. A lot of the earlier research I was sharing before, it was kinda talking about like, well, what's going on with all this screen-time? What are the current habits? Is it effecting child development? And then now we're seeing a big shift in the research moving towards really looking at parent behaviors, and how those are affecting children's behaviors. Also, when you... I feel a strong passion to always mention mental health.

So children's who have depressed moms watch twice as much TV, in those families. And then moms of children with autism have the highest rates of depression. We also

know that children with autism have higher screen-time, have more screen-time than children without, as a whole. And then when there's relationship issues in a family of between couples, that's also associated with increased tablet use. And we're seeing more and more of these studies, I've just shared a few of them. But I just feel like if we can strengthen parents, we strengthen a child, and that sometimes this like high amount of screen-time a child might be having, is perhaps secondary or a symptom of something else.

And so I think it's really important to share resources to expand our knowledge. I think I just shared a few links and resources about, being able to kind of recognize when a parent might need more than just someone coming to work with their child, and that could be, like I said, the screen-time could be a symptom of something more, more deeper going on for a family. So just to summarize, the four Cs are the content, that's what's on the screen, the context, who, when, where, and how much screen-time is happening? The individual child and the child's caregivers.

It's important to talk about all these four Cs because this is gonna lead, when you kind of assess a baseline of like what's happening context wise, specific to the child, the caregiver. That's your tip, that's your lead off point to where you might start this conversation with a parent, where you might have this, how you might have this conversation and be able to make recommendations that a family can actually hear, and actually employ. so let's just talk about some nudges. These are just like gentle ways to encourage parents. So we talked about media diet ideas. These are ways that like kind of reducing, or cutting screen-time out, not necessarily in full, but we'll discuss them. And then developmental menu ideas. So let's just talk about both of these. So we wanna use enhancements to build on what the caregiver is already doing, what they're already doing well, right?

Again, strengths-based. So for example, sometimes they'll give a parent a list, very generic list and I'll just say like, oh, are you already doing any of these things, or is

there anything that you think you could do? Are you interested in trying to do any of these things? And a parent we'll say like, oh yeah, like we don't eat, we don't eat dinner with any screens. And I'll be like, oh, that's great. What about at lunch? Oh, well we could be better about that. And you know, anyways, this comes, this is gonna be individualized. So this is just to give you some really broad ideas of things you can, again identify strengths and then how to build off of them.

And I'm a little bit more inclined to use these develop menu. Developmental menu ideas meaning we look for, something that's already happening that's going well, and how to perhaps increase it. So, oh, you're already reading books before bedtime. I wonder if we could do that before nap time too. Have you tried that? And having these problem solving types of conversations with families, just to increase other things in their day.

So what we know is that almost every activity besides sleep and screen-time requires some movement. So if we can focus on other activities throughout the day, then we can essentially decrease screen-time without actually saying, you need to reduce your screen-time. So we're just increasing other daily activities. One of the things I just passed over really quickly is, and this is number 10 sometimes just replacing. So when I needed my kids to just have some screen-time, I would say something like, let's watch a yoga video, and we'd like do yoga together. I mean, I live in Los Angeles where we can be outside most of the year, but I realized because we have a lot of family who's not in Los Angeles, how difficult it is to be indoors so much of the year, without having some screen-time, but getting some movement in through like kids yoga videos, which are free on YouTube, or different types of movement videos and activities. Here's some free tools I just like to share, these are different things you can spend time at on your own to look through.

They are just some free tools from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Some therapists have shared that they like using these tools, because it's an easy way to

start a conversation with parents. They're really easy to use. It gives a lot of suggestions that don't feel like they're coming directly from you, that it's coming from someone else. And so it's a lot of the information in here I've summarized already, but it just gives you another tool. And let's talk about this joint media engagement. So it used to be called co-viewing and it just means basically watching. So they changed the term 'cause they said, we don't want you to just sit and watch with your child.

We want there to be engagement, some back and forth talking, some discussion. Because we know that infants and toddlers are more likely to learn from screens if they were interacting with a peer or an adult. So the more that caregivers verbalized while watching with their child, the more infants and toddlers responded and looked at the screen. These are some older studies, but they have looked at this behavior. The scientists have actually researched this. But what we know about joint media engagement is that it only seems, it doesn't happen all the time, so it's highly recommended.

But in the studies a lot of times it's not happening more than one third of the time. So this is two to four year olds when viewing a mobile device, it's often two thirds of the time they're on their own. And I see that a lot with families where the child just takes the phone, knows the password and like might disappear for awhile on their own. So Katherine, this is a great time if you wanna start the video. Thank you. And I am gonna play the video. This is an example of joint media engagement, this is when my daughter was 18 months old, and I recorded this to use as a coaching tool for families to kind of show them what I meant by joint media engagement. But not for me to do it with their children, for them to kind of be coached on how to do it and feel empowered that they could also use this strategy as well. So normally this is a video where, these videos were popular a long time ago, but the type of video where it has really annoying background music, and I just strictly you'll see once I hit play, that the music for the video she's watching has been muted. And that I use the pause, I provide verbal cues

and that's really what we're going for with this joint media engagement. What's she gonna do next? What's she gonna do?

- What's she gonna do? What's she gonna do to this egg? What's she gonna do?

- Open it.

- Yes let's see.

- Santa

- No way.

- Santa.

- Oh, kind of looks like Santa. Are you hiding it from me? But yes. So once I show that video to parents, they are often like, ooh, I get it. And if anyone wants a link to that, I hope that I have my email in this. I just realized I can probably upload that so that you guys could use it with families too. 'Cause a lot of parents have said like, okay, I get it. I can do that. And it really does make a difference. It makes parents feel like, okay, I'm not just sitting here and watching with them. I can feel good about like pushing pause and working on certain different language strategies.

So hopefully that video played for you and if not, I can share my email at the end if I didn't in the slides. Okay, so one thought is just when it comes to joint meeting engagement, again, we don't make the same recommendations for every family. This is something that you have to use your own best clinical judgment, right? So for some parents, I would recommend they try this strategy. For other parents, I would say, well, if you have time to interact with your child, maybe that time is better spent with play, or books, or other routines.

Again, in some instances a child viewing alone could be more beneficial if the caregiver can actually get some rest, and then have energy, be less stressed, or be more patient, or more responsive when interacting with their child. Again, these recommendations are not one size fits all and we can't. This was actually my biggest frustration with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, is because they specialize in child health and we specialize in knowing that different children develop differently, and that we have to be able to tailor our recommendations. And we can't just say no screen-time for kids under 18 months. This conversation is much more complicated than that. Okay, let's go through how a visual attention develops to screens. A lot of, this is often the favorite part for some therapists, so I hope you guys enjoy this. But we're just gonna talk about what happens.

Like how does this understanding of screen-time happened for babies? So when babies are first born, we know that they prefer and that they look at faces from birth. For kids under six months of age they understand almost nothing that they see, or hear on a screen. And at six months they might start to recognize some familiar objects on screen. Like they might recognize that YouTube icon, but they won't yet understand how those objects are, what they see on screen relates to something in reality. They won't realize like, oh, that, that Mickey characters is the same guy that I saw when my mom took me to Disneyland. And then from three to nine months of age, their baby's eye gaze is gradually starting to be directed to faces on screen. So it happens gradual. You can see from birth in reality, kids look at screen, Kids look at faces, excuse me, from birth. They look at faces. But they don't look at faces on a screen until three to nine months of age.

Don't forget that pacing and all those, visual effects, those are distracting for kids. They don't even know where to look. As adults, we look immediately to faces and eyes on a screen, which we can measure and check with eye tracking studies. So infants don't yet understand that there's a symbolic nature to the pictures, they treat what they

see on a screen as a real object. There's plenty of silly YouTube videos where you can see a baby like going to grasp something that's a flat shooty image, or a photograph and they go to pick it up. 'Cause when they're very young they don't understand like this is a symbol for something else. For kids enter 12 months of age, their eye gaze is again, it's directed by those formal features. That's why they keep looking. The producers in the TV industry are very smart, they know what strategies to put in their films and their shows to keep kids' eyes glue. They use the bright colors, they use the music, they use the fast pacing and that's what keeps their eyes fixated. Around 18 months, children are starting to have some ability to relate TV to real world objects. They'll see something on TV and they'll go look for it in their room.

They'll go look for their Elmo Cup when they saw Elmo on TV. There's some interesting studies I don't have time to go into today, but they look at how, sometimes from 18 months onward, babies are starting to understand what they see on screen. Doesn't mean they can understand everything, but they're not really understanding anything before 18 months of age on a screen. They might be able to be some little things here and there, but it's really not until after 18 months. And then this is all impacted by their cognition, their executive function skills. So the researchers don't even really know, how exactly children learn from screens at this age or what they're capable of learning. But they do know that it's gonna be individualized depending on that child's cognition and their, you know, all of these other skills that are also developing. Okay, so three year olds and onward are much better at transferring information between 2D to 3D.

They can see something on 2D and then they can maybe like here, slang a silly word and apply it in real life, and use it correctly. So they're better at like picking up words and applying them in real life, and transferring information. But even after three, three and a half, five and even older than that, transferring information between screen and reality is really challenging, when it comes to more, abstract or fantasy. And there's a lot of concerns around that with children thinking video games or things that's violent and how does that, how does that play out in reality and what does that mean? Okay,

so I have some question. I feel like I was hurting a little bit because I was worried that with the video that I was getting behind. But I'm gonna summarize a little bit and share some resources, and then it looks like we'll have enough time to go through some questions too. So just to summarize, since I couldn't. This is just a summary of a lot of content, but experts do you agree that caregivers of these Generation Alphas or digital natives as we're calling them, can benefit from media mentorship, from having some guidance on this topic.

And surveys indicate parents want trusted support and information about it, about screen-time. So when we're making recommendations, we need to consider those four C's. Remember content, context, child and the caregivers. And that we need to individualize our recommendations. Not gonna be the same thing for every family, not gonna be the same starting point for each family. And we need to consider the learners potential for change. So one of my former professors, Dr Juliane Woods, at Florida State, she used to say, "Whatever you're choosing to change, "you have to remember it, "it has to create the biggest change for the child, "with requiring the least amount of change "for the caregiver." It's really hard for us as adults to change our own behaviors. So it's like that 1% change. We don't wanna request caregivers to do a big change 'cause then they won't do it. Before I was a mom, I would go into my home visits and I would say, oh, try this, do that, follow their lead. Like, give them choices, provide a visual.

And it was like way too much. I needed to pick one little tiny thing that was manageable. And when you do that, it's like, you know, that relationship between, you know, we just know that fosters are really strong relationship between the parent, and the practitioner, and the child, and everyone feels successful. And when it comes to screen-time, it can be really hard to change our behaviors. Even for me with my own devices and phones, and my own screen-time. Trying to make a little change can be really hard. We also know that visual comprehension of screen content develops over time.

So babies understand almost nothing that they see or hear on screen. It's a gradual thing that develops over time and it's gonna be different for each child depending on their cognitive capacity, and those working memory skills, inhibitory control, all of those things are gonna impact what a child's capable of understanding on a screen. So, I think this is gonna give us some time for questions, but also I would say it might make me think of some other things that I can add, before I get to those. I just wanna share some other resources.

So to learn more, to stay up-to-date. Here's just a couple, I can't share them all with you, but there's a few resources. There's tons of references if you're interested in the research. There's a couple people to follow if you do Twitter, I don't, but I think these people all still kind of keep up. And so I also admin a Facebook group, It's called Media Mentorship for zero to 36 month old. It's mostly a place to share more parent friendly information. But this topic is so, such a buzz that it's really hard. We have to be careful about what resources we're sharing. So I try to keep this a space. It's not a very active Facebook group, but it's a group where hopefully the resources are reliable. Because you can just go on Google and find anything to support any perspective, or any belief, and especially when it comes to this topic. So we're trying to share information that is both parent friendly and sound.

Okay. This is my little thank you slide and quote from Fred Rogers, but Aimee I think probably good time to turn it over to you and I can try to get through some questions. The first question is coming from Jamie and she's asking about, saying that she has a six week old and that some of her friends and family would like to use FaceTime or video chat of course to see the baby and to be able to interact. She's wondering if I've done any research, or I found any research that speaks to whether or not this video chat might be harmful if done occasionally. I will say that, really that most of the research surrounding video chat, speaks to it being the best type of screen-time that there is.

My own children certainly had FaceTime opportunities with their grandparents across the country, from the time they were little. Of course we don't wanna be using it often or all the time. But this idea of video chat, is different from watching something and or using like an app because there's actual contingent interaction, back and forth interaction with a human being while it's not the same as, being able to like sit in someone's lap and touch them.

It is still more social and real life-like and not at six weeks old, but toddlers are certainly able to actually, research has shown that they can even learn new words from these types of interactions ,just as well as they can learn new words from real life interactions. So there's some evidence showing that video chat functions a little bit differently than I'm watching TV, or playing on an iPad, or watching videos. And so I certainly wouldn't feel that this would be something that we have any evidence to say is harmful. So hopefully that helps. You know, a lot of grandparents out there are probably relieved to hear that they can keep doing some FaceTime perhaps with their little ones that may not live close by. Hannah is asking, she says, "When parents have asked me for guidance "on good screen-time, "I've recommended Pixar movies because of the strong "but simple narrative structures.

"But I wasn't even considering the formal features, "or the shot length or the scene length. "Was that a bad recommendation?" So I would hope that, yeah, don't feel guilty after you've seen this about possibly having done any bad recommendations. I think as clinicians, like at one of the things I've tried to stress is that we're gonna individualize our recommendations based on each family, and certainly, and it sounds like you've been thinking about, this narrative structure and the language that's being used, which of course we do a speech pathologists.

And there's so much involved with the science of screen-time that it would not be intuitive to think about these formal features, and how a child's attempting to process

that or understand it, or how fast each scene is moving. So definitely don't feel like that was a bad recommendation. But one of the things that I would say is, if a child really likes a specific show or a specific movie, or the family has older siblings that are, watching Pixar movies or whatever it is. Sometimes I've told parents that it's okay to watch the same thing over and over and over, versus changing it like a new episode, or a new video, or a new movie everyday, or even every few days. Because that additional time and the repetition, researchers have found aids learning, meaning kids are more likely to understand what they're seeing on a screen, when they've had multiple opportunities to see it.

Of course for us as adults, it becomes incredibly boring to listen to the same, frozen song over and over and over again, or the same, see the same movie again and again and again. But you know, that might actually be a sign that children are wanting to see this over and over again, because they're actually beginning to process it, because it is so fast paced. And then I have another question that I find really interesting.

So Laurie says, "I find that my families with the greatest issues "around their toddlers use of screens "is for children with ASD autism, "who tend to use screen-time for stimming "rather than functional viewing and using of screens. "Are there good references for helping "replace screen-time in this particular situation?" So I don't necessarily have good references to share off the top of my head. Maybe as I'm answering this, something will come to mind. But what I will say is, this is such an important conversation because we do know that children with autism average much more screen-time, than children without autism.

And from a younger age, and it's not always for this stimming although we do see kids with autism tend to like, wanna hit the same button, again and again or hear the same, the same word again and again and again, and wrecked this reputation, repetitious behavior with screens or watching same video, or the same five second part of the video again and again and again. So that stimming is happening. But even without the

stimming kids with autism in general, do you have more screen-time. Which could be for so many reasons, due to sensory issues, due to, you know, a lot of behavioral things that might be happening where parents, you know, it's very challenging when I was talking about the mental health issues, it's very challenging to raise a child with autism period and sometimes screens provide, a relief for those families.

And so, really what I can say is that it's definitely something, I'm confirming what you're seeing. It's something that's happening. There's some research about what's happening in the brain of a child with autism, compared to what's happening in a typically developing child without autism, when they're looking at a screen and what they're looking at. So kids with autism tend to look at, backgrounds, and mouths, and bodies, and other people. Typically developing children they will tend to look at faces and eyes. So we just know that they're possibly interpreting and seeing differently, when they're experiencing screen-time. One of the best things is not to just cut the screen-time off of course, but if you can get some of that joint media engagement happening where it becomes more interactive. And so that's just one possible thought as a starting point for recommendation 'cause from my experience it's really hard for these families to cut the screen-time off completely. But we definitely want them to have some resources that are manageable. And since social, working on social, supporting social behaviors with children with autism is so important. I would say starting there with that joint media engagement and getting some interaction might be a healthy starting point for some families. And I think that is the end for our questions today. Amy I will turn it back over to you.

- [Amy] All right, well, thank you so much Stacey. I wanted to thank you for being here today to talk on this hot topic. There was lots of good information and we really appreciate you being here. I wanted to say thanks also to our participants for spending an hour of your day with us. I hope everybody has a good afternoon. I'm gonna go ahead and close up the meeting here, and I hope everybody has a wonderful day and that we see you at another webinar again soon. Thanks.