

Screen Time and Healthy Habits

Navigating the Digital Ecosystem

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The Kokanee Salmon and Unintended Consequences



Restoring Our Family's Ecosystem

1. The Research

What the latest science reveals about screen time

2. The Mirror

The role parents play in modeling healthy use

3. The Roadmap

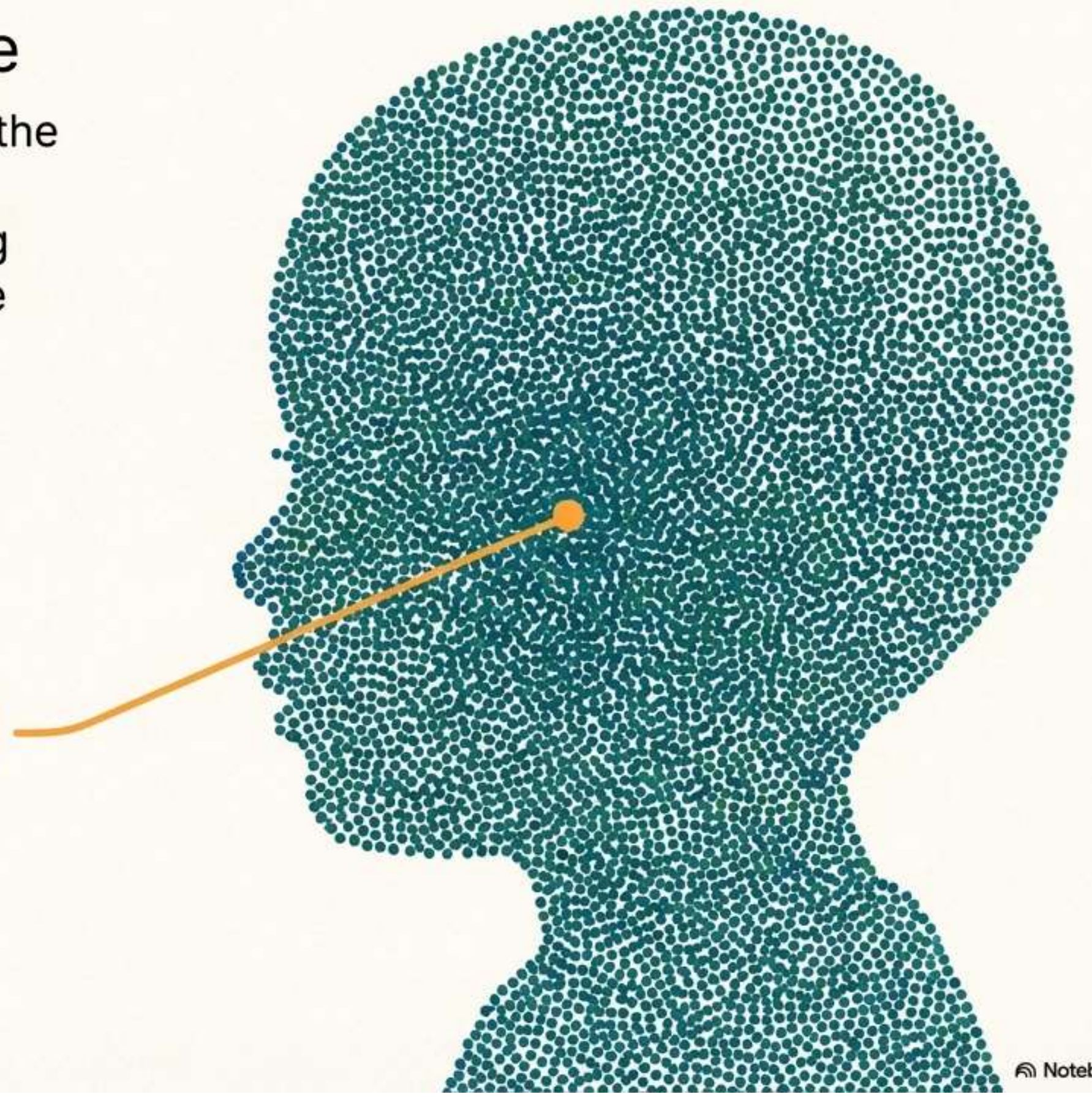
Creating realistic, healthy screen-time expectations



The Scope of the Challenge

A major international study published in the American Psychological Association's Psychological Bulletin reveals compelling data on the true impact of the digital age on early development.

292,000
Children



Increased Screen Time

Socioemotional Problems

FIELD NOTE

They found that increased screen time can lead to emotional and behavioral problems, and kids with those problems often turn to screens to cope.

FIELD NOTE

This included both internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing problems, such as aggression and hyperactivity.

FIELD NOTE

“By understanding the bidirectional relationship between screen use and socioemotional problems, parents... can better support children’s healthy development.” — Roberta Vasconcellos, PhD (apa.org)

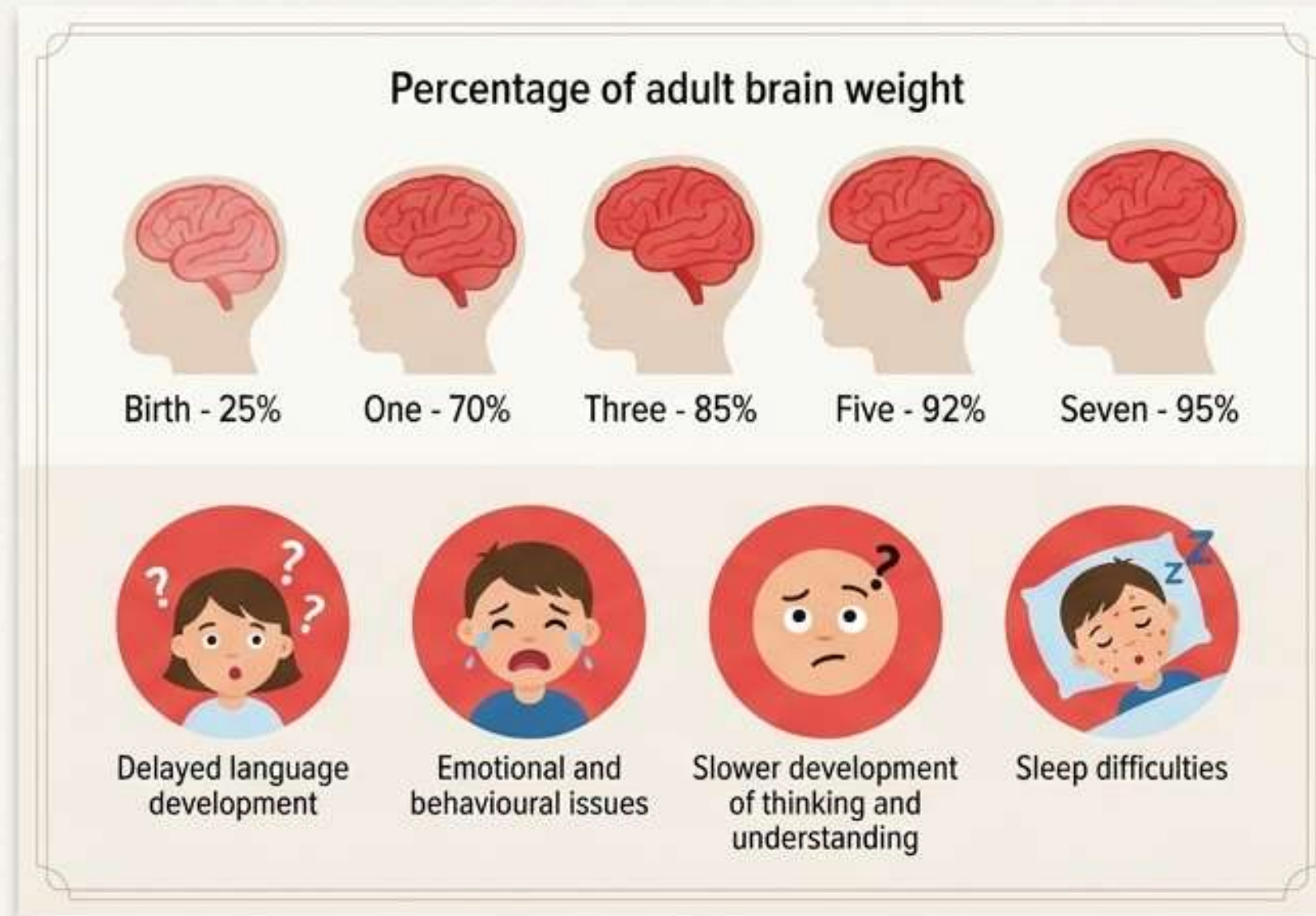
FIELD NOTE

Children (ages 6–10) were more likely to develop socioemotional problems with greater screen use.

FIELD NOTE

Girls were generally more susceptible to developing socioemotional problems... while boys were more likely to increase screen use when facing socioemotional challenges.

The Developing Brain



Preliminary findings from I-LABS / University of Washington support the trend: the scientific community is seeing more than just 'connections'—it is possible that screen time is actively causing these socioemotional and developmental issues.

Part 2: The Role Parents Play

Our children's digital habits do not develop in a vacuum; they grow in the ecosystem we provide.

“Half of all kids and three-quarters of parents *feel the other is distracted when talking to each other.*” — Dr. Michael Rich (“The Mediatrixian”®)



Digital Distraction

“Beware of digital media distraction.”

“Avoid blue light-emitting screen use before bedtime.”

Engaged Presence

“Have regular sit-down, screen-free meals with your children.”

“Put down your device. Be present with others. Observe the world around you. Let your mind wander.”

“Play online games with your children rather than forbidding them. Learn how to play from them...”

“Help your children plan how to spend their time, focusing on important and favorite activities to avoid sliding into the screen abyss.”



Part 3: Creating Realistic Expectations

10 actionable steps to adopt as a family, developed by neuroscientist Dr. Nirvana S. Pillay and aligned with the Canadian Pediatric Society.

Pillar 1 - Structure & Boundaries

“ 1. Build a Family Media Plan:



“ 2. Set Clear, Consistent Limits:



“ 3. Create Screen-Free Zones:



Pillar 2 - Action & Example

4. Prioritise Outdoor and Physical Play:



5. Model Healthy Behavior:



6. Don't Use Screens as Rewards or Punishments:



The Physiological Habit



Every 20 minutes



Look 20 metres away



For 20 seconds

7. Use the 20-20-20 Rule:



Pillar 3 - Connection & Support

8. Leverage Parental Controls:



9. Watch or Play Together:



10. Offer Engaging Alternatives:





Restoring the Ecosystem

By implementing clear boundaries, prioritizing movement, and modeling presence, we can step out of the 'unintended consequences' cycle and intentionally restore the balance in our family's digital ecosystem.

Ecosystem Data Sources & References

- American Psychological Association ([apa.org](https://www.apa.org)) - Screen Time Problems in Children
- Canadian Pediatric Society ([cps.ca](https://www.cps.ca)) - Screen Time and Digital Media
- Harvard Medical School ([hms.harvard.edu](https://www.hms.harvard.edu)) - Screen Time and the Brain
- Canadian Psychological Association ([cpa.ca](https://www.cpa.ca)) - Young Kids and Screens
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Tips to Reduce Children's Screen Time
- Dr. Nirvana S. Pillay - Evidence-Based Strategies to Reduce Screen Time
- National Center for Biotechnology Information ([ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc))