

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **From Teenieboppers to Screenieboppers: Aussie kids glued to screens**

One in ten Australian boys spends more than seven hours a day in front of a television or video game screen.

This is among the eye-opening results of a new study of 10-13 year olds published in the April issue of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

Researchers found that Aussie ‘screenieboppers’ spend a staggering 27% of their waking hours in front of a screen, with more than three quarters of that time related to television and video games.

Even more alarming are the what the study terms ‘extreme screenies,’ kids who stare at a screen for more than five hours a day and for whom TV and video game time leads to low levels of physical activity. Boys are especially vulnerable to becoming extreme screenies.

Only 4-14% of children were found to limit their viewing to 1 or 2 hours of quality programming per day, as recommended by the national health guidelines.

Lead researcher Dr Tim Olds hopes that the study will shock parents into action. “The fact that overall kids spend one quarter to one third of their waking time in front of a screen each day is simply amazing. It can’t be good for you,” Dr Olds said.

The study does not leave parents in a lurch when it comes to helping kids be more active. The researchers offer parents clear action guidelines, which include signing ‘screen contracts,’ limiting screen time during critical times of day and simply talking to kids about their television and video game playing habits.

The study aimed to find out the place of screen time (TV, video, computers and cinema) in the ‘time budgets’ of Australian kids.

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