



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

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AAP National Conference: Changing landscape of media has multiple impacts on children, teens

by Alyson Sulaski Wyckoff, Associate Editor

The complexities of children's electronic media use and how to address the challenges and opportunities were the subject of Friday's Pediatrics for the 21st Century (Peds 21) pre-conference program "The Medium Is the Message: How Electronic Media Are Transforming Our Patients' World."

A panel of experts highlighted both the dangers of unrestricted media use and the benefits, including how media can boost learning, leadership and human connectedness.



Michael Rich, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, addresses the crowd at the Pediatrics for the 21st Century program.

The rapidly changing landscape of media belies many simple solutions for dealing with kids who have grown up with media and understand it better than adults do, panelists said.

"We are advising 'digital immigrants' how to raise 'digital natives,'" said Dimitri Christakis, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Research Institute.

A deeper understanding of media's effects has informed new AAP policies on guiding children's media use, which includes developing a Family Media Plan (<http://bit.ly/2eiiNrG>).

Keynoter Michael Rich, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, contrasted the "no media before age 2" recommendations of 25 years ago with today's knowledge. Media applications are not bad or good, said Dr. Rich, director of the Center on Media and Child Health at Boston Children's Hospital. "(But) we have work to do," he added, calling for more evidence-based research.

How media affect the developing brain remains a special concern. A developing child needs "laps, not apps," Dr. Christakis said.

Advice from other experts included the following:

- AAP Past President David Tayloe Jr., M.D., FAAP, said community partnerships are essential to counter children's lack of school readiness. He cited use of Reach Out and Read.
- Stephen Pont, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, of the Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity, recommended using motivational interviewing when counseling about obesity.
- Neurologist Sujay Kansagra, M.D., FAASM, of Duke University Medical Center, discussed circadian



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rhythm disorders, stating teens' nighttime use of devices can create "social jet lag." Melatonin can be used as a "clock shifting" medication.

- Adolescent medicine specialist Col. Jeffrey Hutchinson, M.D., FAAP, helps youths who play violent video games to acknowledge what they get out of playing the games and consider other activities to replace their use.
- Parents who feel they don't know enough about media use and feel they can't address it with their children can try the learning-to-drive analogy, suggested Megan Moreno, M.D., M.S.Ed., FAAP, of the Seattle Children's Research Institute at University of Washington. She said parents may not understand a carburetor on a car, but that doesn't prevent them from being at the side of a teen learning to drive.

Dr. Moreno also described how intimately teens' identity is connected with their online lives.

Peds 21 was moderated by David Hill, M.D., FAAP, chair of the AAP Council on Communications and Media, which sponsored the meeting supported by the Friends of Children Fund.

For more coverage of the AAP National Conference & Exhibition visit <http://www.aappublications.org/collection/cme>