THE LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN MEDIA ON CHILD WELLNESS

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PARENTAL MONITORING

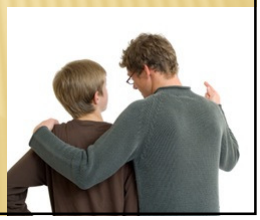
- Parental involvement in media is related to numerous positive outcomes
- Most work examines one form of media and one type of outcome
- Most work only has one informant
- Most work is cross-sectional

FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

- Parental monitoring of both TV and video games
- Child wellness (numerous indicators)
  - Academic
  - Social
  - Physical
- Multiple informants (children, parents, teachers)
- Longitudinal design
- Multiple aspects of monitoring

THEORETICAL APPROACH

- Parental monitoring has four aspects:
  - Co-viewing
  - Limit-setting on amount of media
  - Limit-setting on content of media
  - Active mediation
- These were measured both for TV and video games



METHODS

- 1323 3rd-5th Graders (*N = 430*, 446, 423) recruited from 10 schools in MN and IA
- 47% male, 90% white
- Students, parents, and teachers surveyed in October and May of a school year (7-month longitudinal study)
- Part of a larger study of media and obesity, half of the classrooms involved in the *Switch* intervention program

MEASURES

Child Report (AIM & GMHQ surveys; e.g., Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007)

- Parental Monitoring: Children reported how much their parents set limits on and discussed media with them
- Total Screen Time: Children reported their weekly television, video game, and online computer time
- Media Violence Exposure: 3 favorite TV shows and Video Games - Average

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MEASURES OF WELL-BEING

Teacher Report

- Aggression: Physical & relational aggression, physical & relational victimization
- Prosocial behavior: 4 items
- Attention problems: 4 items
- School performance: 1 item

- Items standardized for analyses

CHILD AND PARENT REPORT

Item (Child version is displayed– parent versions ask about 'you' and 'your child')	r (N)	Child Report: % Always/ Often or Yes	Child Report: Mean (SD)	Parent Report: % Always/ Often or Yes	Parent Report: Mean (SD)
Co-Viewing					
How often do you watch TV together with a parent?	**.26** (920)	44.7%	-0.03 (.68)	38.1%	0.31[c] (.68)
How often does a parent play computer or video games with you?	**.24** (766)	12.0%	-.79 (.72)	2.7%	-.89[c] (.82)
Limits on Amount					
How often does a parent put limits on how much time you may watch TV?	**.33** (908)	35.8%	-.30 (1.08)	59.7%	0.64[c] (1.07)
Does your family have rules about how much TV may be watched? (N/S/Y)	**.30** (805)	28.3%	2.01 (.77)	51.3%	2.24[c] (.87)
Does your family have rules about when TV may be watched? (N/S/Y)	**.14** (843)	37.5%	2.04 (.86)	70.2%	2.54[c] (.75)
Does your family have rules about how much you may play video games? (N/S/Y)	**.23** (694)	35.7%	2.03 (.84)	61.5%	2.39[c] (.84)
Does your family have rules about when you may play video games? (N/S/Y)	**.19** (711)	36.1%	1.97 (.86)	67.7%	2.46[c] (.82)

CHILD AND PARENT REPORT

Item (Child version is displayed– parent versions ask about 'you' and 'your child')	r (N)	Child Report: % Always/ Often or Yes	Child Report: Mean (SD)	Parent Report: % Always/ Often or Yes	Parent Report: Mean (SD)
Limits on Content					
How often does your parent help you decide what programs to watch?	**.16** (903)	22.7%	-.60 (.94)	65.8%	0.83[c] (.99)
How often do you have to ask permission before watching a movie or DVD on TV?	**.37** (909)	45.1%	-.04 (1.13)	61.1%	0.72[c] (1.25)
How often does a parent help decide what video games you may buy or rent?	**.15** (714)	45.3%	0.05 (1.15)	90.7%	1.59[c] (0.81)
How often do you have to ask permission before playing video games?	**.42** (758)	39.2%	-.21 (1.21)	53.1%	0.49[c] (1.34)
Active Mediation					
How often does a parent talk to you about the TV and movies you watch?	**.11** (910)	21.2%	-.54 (.86)	53.0%	0.53[c] (.79)
How often does a parent talk to you about the video games you play?	**.15** (763)	15.6%	-.77 (.86)	34.5%	0.13[c] (.97)

WHY SO MUCH DISCREPANCY?

- Why do parents say they monitor at about twice the rate children say they do?
  - Parents may be more accurate because they set the rules and are generally more accurate.
  - Children are more accurate because they are more able to see inconsistencies in the family rules and because their parents are not always around to see what the children actually do. Furthermore, parents may feel some social desirability when answering.
  - It is also possible that both may be equally accurate reporters, and the low correlation between parents and children is due primarily to random error in measurement.

WHICH REPORTER PREDICTS OUTCOMES BETTER?

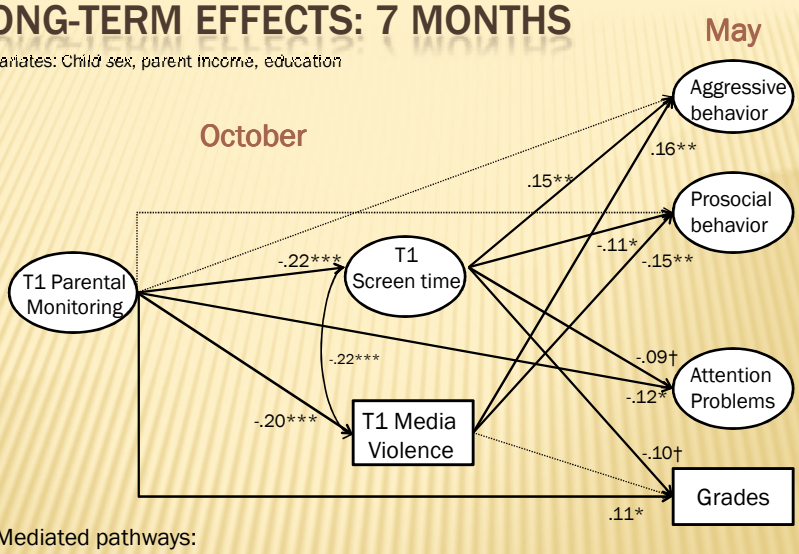
- Both children and parents reported on children's screen time
  - Regressions controlling for child age, sex, family marital status, parental education, and total household income
- Child-reported parental monitoring predicting:
  - Child-reported TV **β = -.32**, $p < .001$
  - Parent-reported TV **β = -.17**, $p < .001$
- Parent-reported parental monitoring predicting:
  - Child-reported TV **β = -.14**, $p < .001$
  - Parent-reported TV **β = -.32**, $p < .001$

WHICH REPORTER PREDICTS OUTCOMES BETTER?

- Active mediation is hypothesized to lessen both media violence exposure and the effects of it
  - Children reported on their violent media exposure (TV & video games)
- Child-reported parents' active mediation predicting:
  - Media Violence Exposure **β = -.19**, *p* < .001
- Parent-reported active mediation predicting:
  - Media Violence Exposure TV **β = -.09**, *p* = .007

LONG-TERM EFFECTS: 7 MONTHS

Covariates: Child sex, parent income, education

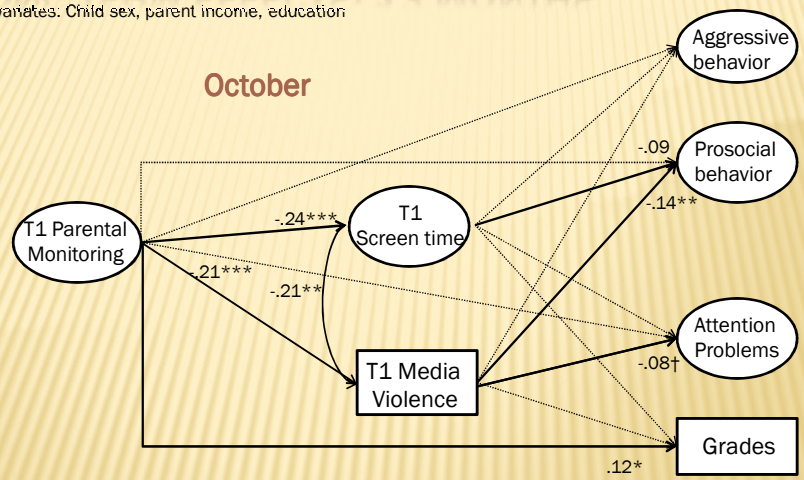


Mediated pathways:
- AM -> TST -> Aggressive Behavior β = -.067
- AM -> TST -> Prosocial Behavior β = .055
- AM -> TST -> Attention Problems β = .035
- AM -> TST -> Grades β = -.030

Overall model fit - reasonable

LONG-TERM EFFECTS: 13 MONTHS

Covariates: Child sex, parent income, education

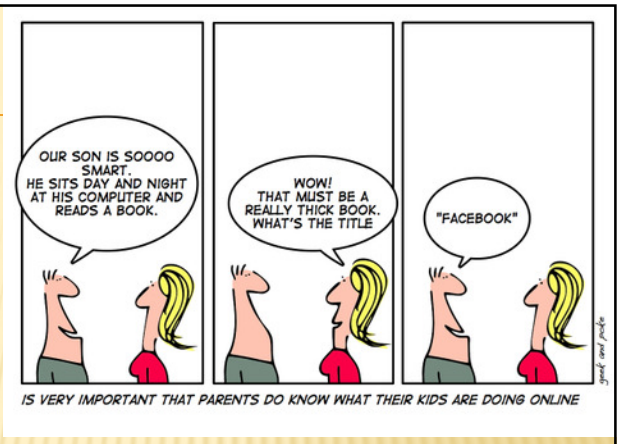


Overall model fit – Reasonable

CONCLUSIONS
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Children and parents are both appropriate informants about parental monitoring
  - Children may even be a little better…
- Parental monitoring (and active mediation in particular) may have long-term benefits
- We are continuing to look into differential effects of the 4 different aspects of parental monitoring
- We are also looking at other aspects of children's health, including physical activity, diet, extra-curricular activities, etc.

QUESTIONS?



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