

Exploring media use among young Hispanic children

December 12 2013, by Wendy Leopold

Hispanic children read for more than an hour a day, an average of 14 minutes more per day than non-Hispanic white children, according to a new study released today (Dec. 11) by Northwestern University and the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL).

The national study, "Media, Technology and Reading in Hispanic Families," provides a detailed look at family practices related to reading and electronic media use in Hispanic households with children age 8 or under.

"It is critical that teachers, children's advocates and others promoting children's well-being better understand the relationships between media use and children's academic achievement, health and social/emotional development," said Ellen Wartella. Wartella is lead author of the newly released report and director of Northwestern's Center on Media and Development.

Among the study's findings:

- Hispanic children spend an average of 14 minutes more reading each day than non-Hispanic [white children](#), with no differences within Hispanic families based on income or education.
- Nearly six in 10 Hispanic [parents](#) (59 percent) say computers have a positive effect on children's reading skills. Their views on the impact of television and mobile devices on literacy also lean more positive than negative.

- Video games are viewed with far greater suspicion. Although 73 percent of Hispanic families own a console [video game player](#) and their young children spend an average of 24 minutes a day using them, more than four out of five parents view video gaming's effects on their children's social skills and behavior as negative.
- Significant differences in mobile access exist between Hispanic and non-Hispanic families. While Hispanic parents and non-Hispanic white parents own smartphones at a similar rate, Hispanic parents are less likely to own tablet devices (33 percent) than non-Hispanic white parents (46 percent).
- Children in Hispanic families that own computers and [mobile devices](#) use them more frequently than non-Hispanic white children do. On average, Hispanic children use tablet devices 11 minutes more per day; computers 13 minutes more per day; and smartphones 16 minutes more per day than non-Hispanic white children.
- Most Hispanic parents view computer and digital literacy as essential skills for their children. Approximately eight out of 10 believe that their children are as proficient in computer and tablet skills as their same-aged peers.
- Television remains the dominant medium in Hispanic [family](#) life. Nearly all Hispanic families (99 percent) own a TV set, and 50 percent have three or more TV sets in the home. Children spend more time watching TV than using any other medium, averaging 2 hours and 7 minutes a day.

The report is based on the results of a nationally representative survey of 663 Hispanic parents of [children](#) ages 8 or under.

More information: Read the complete study:
[web5.soc.northwestern.edu/cmhd ... liesMedia_120313.pdf](http://web5.soc.northwestern.edu/cmhd...liesMedia_120313.pdf)

Provided by Northwestern University

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