



# Tots and tech: challenges for early childhood in a digital age

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## **Sarah Blunden**

**Professor Sarah Blunden, Head of paediatric sleep research  
CQ University**

Topic: Screen time or dream time?

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### **Biography**

Professor Sarah Blunden (MAPS, BAPsych (Hons), MSocSc, PhD) has a dual role as Head of Paediatric Sleep Research and Director of the Clinical Masters in Psychology at Central Queensland University, Australia and is a clinical psychologist specialising in the treatment of children's sleep problems. Sarah is the Founder/Director of the Paediatric Sleep Clinic, Director of the Australian Centre for Education in Sleep© ([www.sleepeducation.net.au](http://www.sleepeducation.net.au)) (ACES) and chair of the Indigenous Sleep Special Interest group of the Australasian Sleep Association. Her research interests include sleep education, indigenous sleep, sleep interventions for young children, the impact of poor sleep on children and families and the causes of poor sleep in children and young people.

### **Abstract**

Reduced sleep quantity and quality are known to affect behaviour, attention, learning, mood, and appetite and weight status both in the short and long term. One factor shown to reduce sleep quantity and quality of sleep is the use of screens, particularly at bedtime, as it decreases sleep quality, increases psychological arousal, changes sleep architecture, induces anxiety, emotional arousal and nightmares. Yet it is increasingly part of bedtime routines in young children. This presentation will present evidence based information on the use of screens before bedtime and its impact on sleep and subsequently on general health. Strategies and suggestions as to how we can utilise screens without jeopardising sleep will conclude the session.