



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

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## Professor Sheena Reilly

Topic: Promoting Child Language Development via Healthy Screen Time

### Biography

Professor Sheena Reilly is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Health) at Griffith University, having held numerous senior positions within the academic, health and research sector over the past 20 years. Professor Reilly is a leading international expert, renowned for her research that has transformed our current-day understanding, clinical practice and policy of speech, language and literacy problems in children. Her extensive research track record is evidenced by more than 200 peer-reviewed articles, in excess of \$50 million in competitive grants and is the recipient of prestigious awards including the inaugural Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

### Abstract

Spoken and written language underpins the health, productivity, and social well-being of individuals and ultimately, the human capital of a nation. Language skills provide the foundation for learning, that is literacy and numeracy. Most children acquire spoken and written skills with relative ease. Children who are regularly read to and who have lots of books in their homes have been shown to do better in their first years of school. These children are more likely to have better letter knowledge and language skills which translate into higher rates of literacy and better spelling skills. What parents do matters and their own reading habits, the number of books in the homes and how much time they spend on book reading impact on children's development.

Technology is firmly embedded in the homes of most young children. In addition to televisions, the average Australian home has more than 4 screens. The families' relationship with technology includes how individual members use technology and how technology affects family relationships, interactions and therefore communication. This talk will focus on how, when used well, daily screen time limits on quality media can enhance children's speech, language and literacy.