

Parents and adolescents growing up in the Digital Age:

Latent growth curve analysis of proactive media monitoring.

THE GIST: We examined how parents changed their control over their children's screen time over three years – specifically with TV and the internet - and we watched how it changed both parent and child regarding screen time restriction, monitoring, and respect. For the first two years, parents mostly used active monitoring, but the last year's observation showed active monitoring balanced with respect. Over time, restrictions and monitoring decreased, while respect increased. Outcomes varied based on parent and child characteristics (For example, parent's beliefs, connection to the child, and parent's media consumption—or children's age, behavior, and emotional regulation).

THE TAKEAWAY: Parents tend to modify their monitoring style to adapt to the changing needs of their children. As parents and children change together and build respect, parents may become more flexible and allow more opportunities for autonomy. Parents who place a level of trust in their children may relax and have fewer discussions about media content, letting go of some rules and restrictions. Future research should continue the conversation on whether or not this media monitoring over time yields good or bad outcomes. Parents may need to monitor children's screen time early to lay a good foundation before gradually letting adolescents monitor themselves responsibly.