

Understanding the Why: Parent Beliefs About Mobile Devices for Infants and Toddlers



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An Ecology of Technology: Infants, Toddlers and Mobile Screen Devices

(2016, Wooldridge, M.)

Why do parents give their MSD to their child?

- **occupy / distract**
- **videochat**
- **teach**
- **calm**
- develop fine motor
- sleep aid
- therapy activities
- other



occupy
videochat



occupy



calm
occupy

General Attitudes About Technology for Young Children

Appropriate age for child's own MSD: **10 years** [SD 3.3]

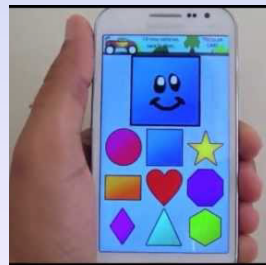
Negative Beliefs

- Too young
- Prefer 'real' activities
- Unnecessary
- Developmental Harm
- Affordability
- Family Policy

Positive Beliefs

- Parent benefit
- Peer inclusion
- Learning tool
- Communication device
- Digital literacy

Beliefs about Child Digital Products



Good for child?

79% no

64% no

61% yes

Would you buy?

89% no

82% no

50% yes

Negative Reasons

Age, inferior to real MSD, fear dependency, limited value, parent dislike, family policy

Positive Reasons

Parent utility, learning tool, fun

Beliefs About Technology for Young Children

If your child has an MSD, what are the reasons?

“Learning young how to use relevant technology”

Child Benefit

“We can get things done without a toddler pestering us”

Parent/Family Benefit

Beliefs About Technology for Young Children

No Need

"I can't see why she needs one"

Too Young

"couldn't operate a device yet"

Prefer 3D

"we prefer books & toys for real play"

Harmful

"I don't want a screen addict"

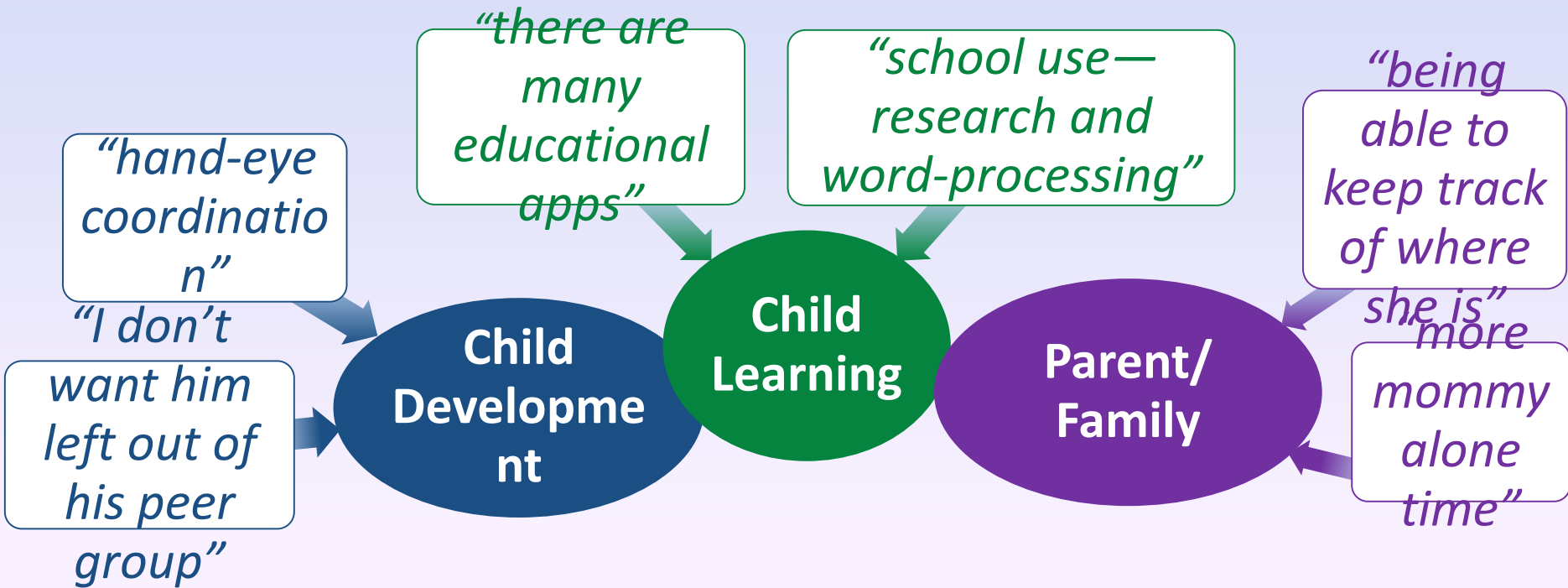
Family Organization

"we don't believe in letting our child watch screens"

If your child does not have an MSD, what are the reasons?

Beliefs About Technology for Young Children

What benefits do you foresee for you child using MSDs?



Why are Parent Beliefs Important?

- **Cognitions** (Sigel & McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 02; Sigel et al, 92)
- **Dynamic** (Bornstein, 02)
- **Influence Child Development** (Coleman & Karraker, 00; Grusec, 06)
- **Direct Parent Behaviour** (Dichtelmiller et al, 92; Grusec, 02; Miguel et al, 09; Murphey, 92; Sigel et al, 92)
- **Reflect Zeitgeist** (Murphey, 92)

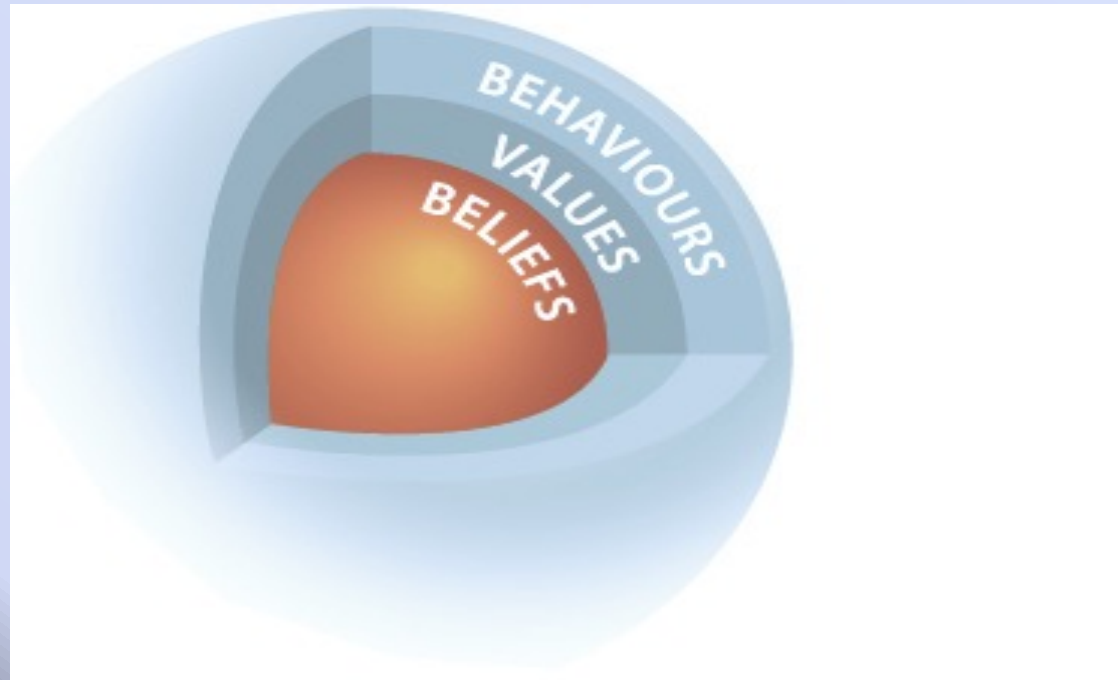
Parent Beliefs about Screen Media

- **Beliefs re TV predicts child TV viewing**
(Certain & Kahn, 02; Dalzell et al, 00; Jago et al, 10; Rideout & Hamel, 06)
- **Parental attitudes re screen media linked to child media consumption across platforms** (Cingel & Krcmar, 13; Lauricella et al, 15)
- **Positive attitudes re media technology linked to earlier and greater child use** (Vittrup et al, 16)
- **Parental beliefs re mobile devices predicts parents providing mobile devices to infants & toddlers** (Wooldridge, 16)

Beliefs

=

Our interpretation of the world according to our observations and experiences



2 components: **emotional** and **logical**

Starts like a theory

- logic then supported by emotion
- emotion then supported by logic

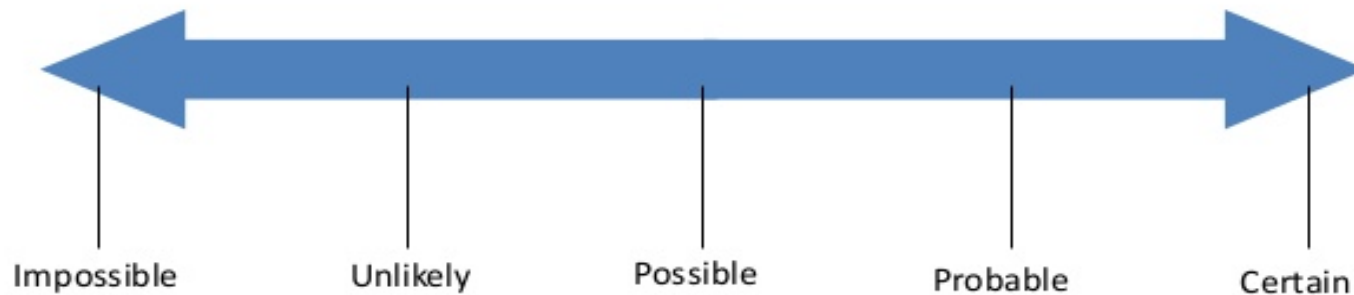
Empowering or disempowering

- *Power comes from the **believer**, not the material*



Knowledge and Belief

- Knowledge and Belief are related and lie on some kind of continuum (we may disagree about where each actually lies and whether the positions are fixed)



- Beliefs may or may not be true, and do not necessarily require justification

What About Perception?

Perception is awareness shaped by belief.

Beliefs “control” perception.

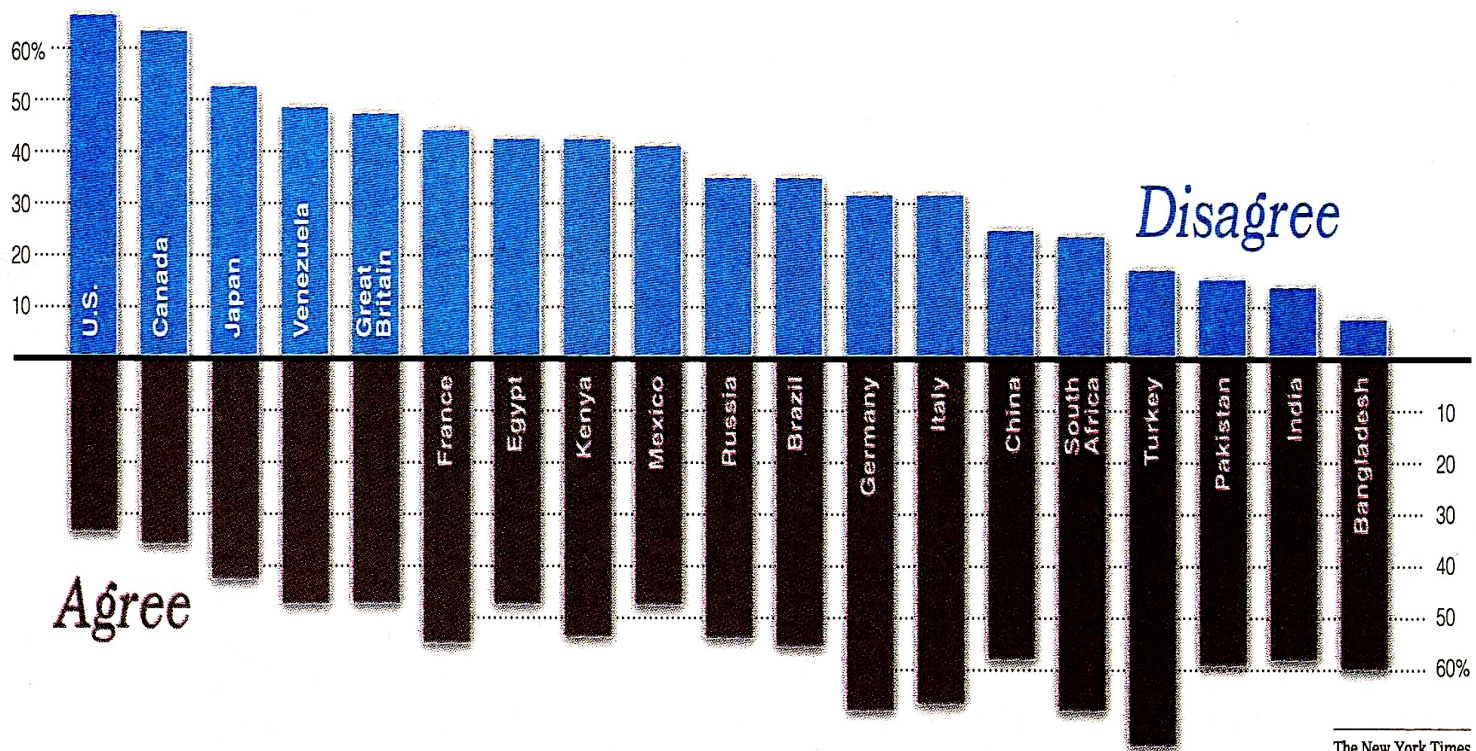
Rewrite beliefs and you rewrite perception.

Rewrite perception and you rewrite genes and behaviour....

- Bruce Lipton, Ph.D., cellular biologist

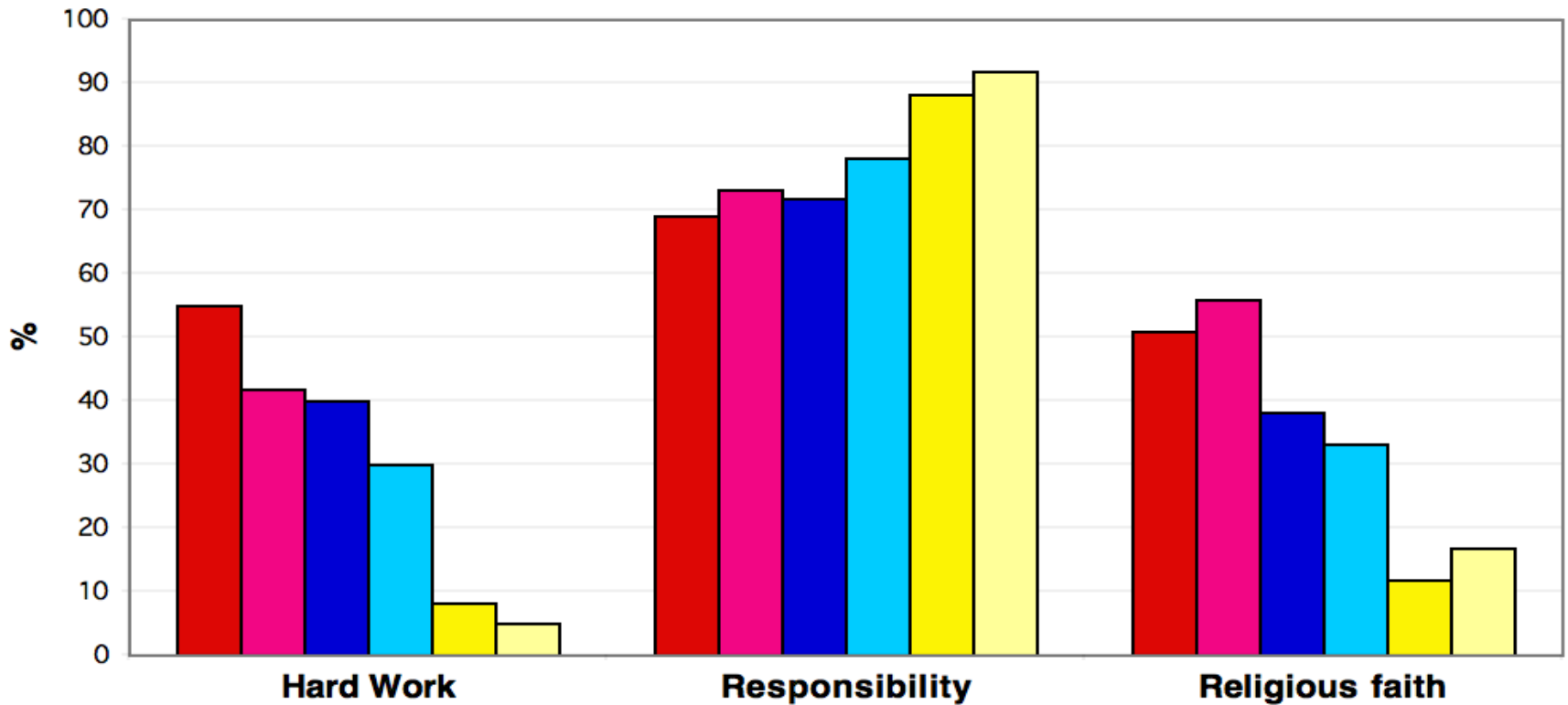
‘Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control.’

— A Pew Center poll in 2002 of 38,000 people in 44 countries. Americans, more than any other respondents, disagreed.



Qualities Children Should Learn at Home

■ US male ■ US female ■ Canada male ■ Canada female ■ Norway male ■ Norway female



Why do we cling to our beliefs?

Cultural Cognition theory:

- we shape our opinions to conform to the views of the groups with which we most strongly identify.
- Our views & opinions help protect us and keep us safe.
- As humans are social animals, we depend on our groups or tribes, literally for our survival. Our chances of survival go up when our group's views prevail and our group accepts us.



(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/cognition>)

Why Is It So Hard to Change People's Minds?

Our opinions are often based in emotion and group affiliation, not facts. Here's how to engage productively when things get heated.

BY ELIZABETH SVOBODA | JUNE 27, 2017 Greater Good Magazine

- Keeps us anchored in the world: when you think & behave in ways that separate you from members of your close community, you're likely to experience at least some level of exclusion
- Inertia: most people would rather deny or downplay new information than reshape their worldview to accommodate it
- Deciding changes our evaluations: once a choice is made, we evaluate our decision more favourably and the other choices less favourably
- Paradoxical effect: outward insistence inversely related to strength of conviction

...a vast amount of social science evidence that has shown that facts, by themselves, are meaningless. They are ones and zeroes to your mental computer, raw blank data that only take on meaning when run through the software of your feelings. [Psychology Today, 2010]

People who feel good about themselves are more likely to be open-minded!

