

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF GADGETS ON THE HEALTH OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND METHODS OF THEIR SOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the multifaceted impact of gadgets on the health and development of young children, emphasizing both the benefits and risks associated with their use. It highlights research indicating that while interactive educational applications can support cognitive development, excessive screen time may impede speech, language, and emotional development. The detrimental effects on sleep quality and physical health, such as vision problems and reduced physical activity, are also discussed.

Keywords: digital autism, physical health and gadgets, physical activity and screen time, effects of screen time on young children.

INTRODUCTION

Modern technologies undoubtedly make our lives easier, but they also make major changes in the development and health of children, especially young children. In recent decades, children have faced increased access to gadgets such as smartphones, tablets and computers. This phenomenon carries with it a number of potential threats to their physical, emotional and social development.

Effects on speech and language: Research shows that excessive use of gadgets can negatively affect the development of speech in children. Time spent behind the screen, especially in passive content consumption, can reduce the number of conversations and interactions with parents, which is critical for language development.

Learning and cognitive skills: Some studies have noted that interactive educational applications can promote learning and the development of cognitive skills in children. However, it is important that such applications are well designed and used in moderation.

Mental and emotional health. Effects on sleep: It has been found that the use of gadgets before bedtime can negatively affect the quality and duration of sleep in children. The blue light from the screens suppresses the production of melatonin, which makes it difficult to fall asleep.

Emotional and social development: Excessive screen time can limit children's opportunities to develop social skills, as they spend less time in personal communication and active play. This can lead to problems with emotional regulation and social interactions. A large flow of information can "cut off" the neural pathways to the frontal lobe, which contributes to attention deficit, decreased concentration and memory. At the same time, the brain becomes dependent on information: neuroscientists have shown that Internet activity excites neurons

in the abdominal tegmental area of the midbrain, which releases the neurotransmitter dopamine into the pleasure centers of the brain, which leads to addiction.

Physical health. Vision and posture problems: Prolonged use of gadgets is associated with an increased risk of developing vision problems such as computer vision syndrome, as well as posture problems due to stationary position when using devices.

Physical activity level: Time spent watching screens often replaces active physical play, which can contribute to the development of obesity and other health problems associated with insufficient physical activity.

American neurologist M.E. Reicheis studied the human brain and highlighted that our brain works in three modes: the central executive system is responsible for information consumption; the significance identification network helps to find ways out in various situations; the default system is responsible for non-standard thinking, for the ability to reflect and abstract thinking. Virtual autism is already a reality. The problem is becoming more urgent year by year – in 90% of cases, parents of children with mental disabilities admitted that their kids spent 4-5 hours a day in front of the TV, mobile phone or tablet.

Methods of solving the problem:

Moderation and balance: Experts recommend limiting screen time for younger children and encouraging other activities such as reading, active play and communication with parents and peers.

In connection with the research conducted, the American Academy of Pediatricians has established that children under 2 years old should not be exposed to gadgets, 3-5 years old is allocated up to 1 hour a day, 6-18 years old the limit should be up to 2 hours a day.

High-quality content: Choose educational and developmental programs and applications that can contribute to learning and development.

Family time: It is important to spend time with children, engaging in joint activities that do not include the use of gadgets, in order to promote their comprehensive development.

Thus, each parent has the opportunity to make their own decision: whether to use computer technology during the upbringing of their child or not. In any case, before introducing your child to gadgets, he should make it clear that a computer is a device that should be used if necessary: for study, work. Adults should not shift the responsibility for raising their baby to artificial intelligence, since no "smart machine" will replace parental attention.

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