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The Impact of Digital Technology on Young Children

Children are being hooked on technology at an early age in today's changing digital world.

Digital technology is influencing every part of their daily lives, from laptops and smart toys to smartphones and tablets. Questions about the impact of technology on the growth and health of young children are raised by its common use. Although there are many benefits to digital technology, there are negatives as well as potential risks, which means it's important to know how it changes brain development. Nowadays, it is pretty normal to see little kids glued to smartphones at places like church, during meals, or just hanging out. Seeing this a lot can make us worry about how kids are growing up these days. In the old days, kids usually played with toys or hung out with friends for fun. However, nowadays things have changed because of smartphones and tablets.

The effect of digital technology on mental growth is one important issue of concern. A lot of screen usage in early childhood has been shown to have negative effects on thinking skills like memory, concentration, and solving problems. Excessive use of screens can result in less time spent on social and physical activities, both of which are crucial to the growth of physical abilities and the emotional and social development of skills. Lots of kids spend their free time staring at screens instead of playing with toys. It is pretty surprising to see how upset kids get when their parents take away their smartphones. This shows how much they rely on technology

from a really young age. This can be worrying because spending too much time on screens can cause problems such as difficulty paying attention, poor social interaction, and sleep disturbances. Mobile technologies are increasingly ubiquitous, with 95% of adolescents in the United States today having regular access to a smartphone and 84% owning their own smartphones (Michaeline et al., 2021). Also, excessive screen usage, especially before bed, may cause problems with sleep patterns, which leads to lack of sleep and all of its negative effects, including frustration, lack of focus, and reduced immunity. Children have a harder time falling asleep and staying asleep because the blue light from screens decreases the release of a hormone that controls sleep.

Digital technology can also affect kids' social and emotional growth. While social media, video interactions, and online games provide chances for interaction with others, spending too much time in front of a screen may reduce social abilities and face-to-face interactions. When the majority of their interactions take place on screens, young children may find it difficult to create meaningful relationships, show kindness, and understand behavioral hints. Children's views on their physical appearances and their impression of themselves can also be impacted by their exposure to digital media, including social media platforms and online content. Studies have shown that frequent interaction with social media's controlled lifestyles and unrealistic physique expectations could increase feelings of failure and low self-worth, especially in teenagers. Our results are in accordance with those found in the literature, which identified a link between social media use and body image disorders. It has also been found that subjects who often compared their physical appearance to that of idealized images were more dissatisfied with their body and

had a higher drive for thinness than those who compared themselves less often (Barbara et al., 2021).

In addition, there are serious issues with cyberbullying and online harassment that can negatively impact children's mental health and well-being. Sometimes when kids are cyberbullied, the thought of going to school is just more than they can handle. Consequently, it's not uncommon for them to skip school or even behave in such a way that results in suspension. In one survey, those who were cyberbullied reported two or more suspensions or detentions in the prior year (Gordon, 2024). However, it is important to recognize that when used carefully and lightly, digital technology might be beneficial for young children. For young learners, educational games and apps can improve thinking skills, help with reading and math, and encourage imagination and creativity. Personal learning preferences and skills can be suited to thorough and engaging learning experiences offered by interactive digital media. Also, digital technology can be used as a tool for communicating and working together, helping kids to build online connections with classmates, relatives, and teachers. Children can participate in online schools, build up connections with distant family members, and work on tasks together with friends from different backgrounds by using video calls and messaging apps for “looked after” children, who often experience disruptions in living arrangements and relationships, digital technologies serve as tools for maintaining meaningful connections and exploring identities in safe environments (Wilson, 2016).

In addition, by giving kids access to a variety of online resources and information, digital technology can allow them to pursue their hobbies and passions. Children can pursue hobbies,

pick up new skills, and express themselves creatively through content creation, whether it's writing stories, creating movies, or creating music through online platforms and communities. Creating appropriate screen time limits as well as promoting digital responsibility is necessary for parents, educators, and governments to help reduce the potential harm that digital technology may cause to young children. Regarding the risks linked to the digital world, research shows that most parents do not think that their kids are exposed to inappropriate online behavior or content by getting a smartphone and if so, that they would be able to deal with such an experience (Laura, et al., 2023). In addition to encouraging outdoor activities and physical exercise, parents can set specific rules and limits on screen usage and serve as good examples for their children. In order to guarantee that technology is used correctly and wisely, educators can include it into the education system in appropriate ways while also offering guidance and courses. Furthermore, lawmakers have a role in controlling the internet world to protect kids from obscene content, online predators, and excess in ads. To create a safe and beneficial online environment for youngsters, laws and regulations have to deal with issues like data security, age-appropriate content, and online privacy.

Thinking about how many kids depend on phones makes us wonder what it means for their future. It makes us think about what kind of childhood they are having and how it might affect them later. As technology keeps getting better, young people need to learn how to use it in a healthy way. They also need to think about how they will deal with these issues when they have kids on their own. Smartphones and tablets are great, but children also need other fun things to do. It is important to find a balance so kids can have different kinds of fun, not just on screens.

By teaching children how to use technology wisely and encouraging them to do other activities, we can help and make sure they have a fun and balanced childhood.

In conclusion, digital technology has built itself into the lives of young children, providing both advantages and disadvantages for their development as well as their health. While excessive screen time and digital media exposure can negatively impact a person's mental, emotional, and social growth, digital technology can also improve communication, creativity, and learning when used responsibly and appropriately. Working together, teachers, parents, and lawmakers can assist in ensuring that young children enjoy technology while reducing its risks, as well as encourage responsible digital citizenship. In a growing digital environment, we can help the next generation's healthy development by promoting a balanced attitude to digital technology.

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