



# The Impact of Excessive Screen Time on the Development of Children

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**Abstract**— This article reviews the effects of excessive screen time on the development of children. Concerns have been raised about the harm that prolonged screen exposure may cause to their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The article explores both the benefits and drawbacks of excessive screen time, highlighting health issues such as obesity, disrupted sleep patterns, and reduced physical activity. Studies also suggest that too much screen time can negatively affect cognitive development, impacting academic performance, memory, and attention. In addition, increased screen time is linked to emotional and social challenges, including heightened risks of anxiety and depression, as well as a decrease in social skills. While digital media can offer educational benefits, excessive screen use often leads to fewer in-person interactions, hindering the development of essential social and communication skills. The article emphasizes the need to set reasonable screen time limits and encourage alternative activities to support balanced development and overall well-being in children.



**Keywords**— Excessive screen time, physical development, cognitive development, emotional development, health issues, sleep patterns, academic performance, mental health, social skills, technology use, digital media, screen exposure.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The research paper studies the use of screens has become a significant part of daily life, especially for children. With easy access to devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and televisions, screen time has become nearly unavoidable. As technology use continues to rise, young people are spending more time in front of screens. While digital devices offer educational and entertainment value, there are growing concerns about the effects of excessive screen time on children's development. Overuse of screens has been linked to various negative outcomes, including physical health issues, emotional and social struggles, and cognitive impairments. Since children are at critical stages of their development, prolonged screen time can harm their physical and mental health, academic performance, and emotional stability. Understanding both the immediate and long-term effects of excessive screen exposure is crucial, as developing minds and bodies are more susceptible to technology's harmful effects. This introduction aims to

explore the scope of the issue, covering the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional implications. By examining both the positive and negative aspects of screen time, the article provides insights into how parents, educators, and policymakers can foster healthier digital habits to support the overall development of young people.

### Excessive Screen Time

Excessive screen time refers to prolonged and often uncontrolled use of digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. It typically describes daily screen use that exceeds recommended limits, which vary depending on a child's age and stage of development. While screen time can offer educational, social, and entertainment benefits, too much of it can harm a child's physical, mental, and emotional development. Health organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), recommend limiting screen time for older children and significantly reducing it for younger children, especially those under the age of two.

Despite these guidelines, many young people exceed these limits due to the increased availability and reliance on digital media.

## KEY CONSEQUENCES OF EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

**1.1 Physical Health Issues:** Long hours of screen time are often linked to a lack of physical activity, which can lead to weight gain and other health issues. The blue light emitted by screens interferes with the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep, disrupting circadian rhythms and contributing to sleep problems, especially when screens are used right before bed. Extended screen use can lead to eye strain, causing headaches, dry eyes, and discomfort.

**1.2 Cognitive Development:** The fast-paced, high-stimulation content commonly consumed during screen time can shorten attention spans and make it harder for children to focus on tasks that require sustained mental effort, such as studying or completing homework. Excessive screen time has been linked to lower academic performance, as it often distracts from learning activities and homework.

**1.3 Impaired Social Skills:** High screen usage, particularly when done alone, can limit in-person interactions and impair the development of social and communication skills.

**1.4 Mental and Emotional Health:** Excessive screen time, particularly related to social media use, cyberbullying, and feelings of loneliness, has been associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety among children. Overexposure to digital content may make it more challenging for young people to manage stress and negative emotions. Understanding these potential risks underscores the importance of promoting a balanced approach to screen time. Encouraging healthier digital habits is essential to ensuring the well-being and healthy development of children.

## II. MANAGING SCREEN TIME

In the digital world of today, screens are used in almost every element of daily life.

Controlling screen time is crucial for a number of reasons.

**2.1 Physical Health:** Controlling screen time is crucial to preserving physical well-being. Keeping devices at eye level, utilizing appropriate lighting, and adjusting screen brightness can all help reduce discomfort. Limiting screen usage at least an hour before bedtime and utilizing night mode or blue light filters in the evening are the best ways to promote healthy sleep. To further counteract the negative consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, include regular breaks to stand,

stretch, or walk about. Making regular exercise, walking, or outside play a priority helps to preserve posture, muscle health, and a healthy weight by preventing screen time from taking the place of movement.

**2.2 Managing Screen Time to Support Cognitive Development (Especially in Children):** In order to support children's healthy cognitive development, screen time management is crucial. Establishing unambiguous guidelines for daily screen usage helps guarantee that kids have adequate time for important developmental pursuits like reading, imaginative play, exercise, and in-person communication. By selecting age-appropriate, high-quality content and co-viewing with kids to talk about and reinforce what they're watching, parents and other adults may encourage good habits. Most significantly, children learn how to responsibly and healthily control their own screen time when parents provide an example of balanced screen habits.

## III. ENJOYING SCREEN TIME IN A HEALTHY WAY

Children's screen usage can be made healthy and pleasurable by setting time limits, taking breaks, varying activities, scheduling downtime for other activities, and avoiding screens just before bed. Select information that is suitable for your age, play and watch with others, avoid using screens during meals, take precautions for your eyes and body, and practice kindness when using the internet.

- 3.1 Establish Time Limits:** Ask an adult for assistance in managing screen time, or set a timer.
- 3.2 Take Regular Breaks:** Get up, stretch, or turn your head away from the screen every 20 to 30 minutes.
- 3.3 Make Time for Other Pleasures:** Spend time with friends and family, read a book, or play outside. Avoid using screens for at least an hour before going to bed.
- 3.4 Select Good Content:** Select age-appropriate and upbeat television programs, games, or applications. If you're not sure, ask a parent or instructor.
- 3.5 Play and Watch with Others:** When you can, spend time on screens with loved ones. It becomes more enjoyable and significant when you discuss what you're playing or viewing.
- 3.6 Avoid Using Screens During Mealtimes:** Make use of mealtimes to engage with family and have conversations. It's a wonderful diversion from the television.
- 3.7 Safeguard Your Body and Eyes:** Use gadgets in a well-lit area, sit up straight, and keep screens at eye level. This helps prevent poor posture and eye strain.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

A child's total development can be greatly impacted by excessive screen usage, particularly in the early stages when emotional, cognitive, and physical development are most important. Long-term screen time can cause problems like diminished attention span, lost language development, sleep disturbances, and a lack of social connection. Even though technology can provide useful learning resources, excessive passive screen time can take the place of vital real-world experiences that kids need to flourish. Parents and other caregivers must establish clear limits, support a range of activities, and encourage a balanced lifestyle in order to foster healthy growth. Children can benefit from screen time without sacrificing their wellbeing if they are given careful direction and are allowed to use it in moderation.

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