

Health

Behavior problems risk

Too much screen time tied to school problems even in tots

NEW YORK, May 19, (Agencies): Kindergartners who get more than two hours of screen time a day may be more likely to have behavior and attention problems in school than their classmates who spend less time in front of televisions, smartphones and tablets, a Canadian study suggests.

Doctors urge parents of young kids to limit screen time or avoid it altogether because all of those hours watching videos or gaming have been linked to slowed development of speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, and social and behavioral skills. After all, time spent in front of screens means less time for scribbling with crayons or playing games that help kids learn how to kick a ball or take turns.

Assessment

In the current study, researchers surveyed parents of more than 2,400 Canadian kids to assess screen time at three and five years. The second assessment also asked about behavior problems like inattention and aggressiveness as well as issues like sleep difficulties, depression, and anxiety.

Very few five-year-olds had these problems: just 1.2 percent of kids had so-called "externalizing" behavior problems like aggression or inattention and just 2.5 percent had "internalizing" problems like depression and anxiety.

But compared to kids who got less than a half hour of screen time daily, children who had more than two hours daily had an almost six-fold greater risk of attention problems and an almost eight-fold greater risk of meeting the criteria for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

"It is never too early to talk to your child about limiting screen time," senior study author Dr. Piush Mandhane of the University of Alberta in Canada said by email.

Canadian guidelines recommend that parents limit screen time to less than one hour a day for children two to four years old and less than two hours daily for older kids, researchers note in Plos One. At age three, kids in the study

exceeded these limits, getting an average of 1.5 hours a day of screen time. They got slightly less - 1.4 hours a day - by age five.

Overall, almost 14 percent of kids had more than two hours a day of screen time.

It's possible that some kids in the study who already had challenges with behavior or social skills opted to spend more time in front of screens because they struggled to relate to peers.

The study also wasn't a controlled experiment designed to prove whether or how screen time might cause behavior problems.

"This study does not draw any conclusion about certain types or contexts of media use being better for child development than others," said Andrew Ribner, a psychology researcher at New York University who wasn't involved in the research.

"However, other research has suggested screen time that has a slower pace, is relatively less fantastical, and provides some kind of contingent responsiveness - something like Sesame Street or Dora the Explorer rather than Spongebob Squarepants - is better than the alternative," Ribner said by email.

Fast-paced digital media can precondition little ones to expect unnatural stimulation, leading to shorter attention spans because real life can seem slow and underwhelming by comparison, said Dr. Dimitri Christakis, director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Research Institute.

"We also know from decades of research that real, human interaction and play is critical to cognitive and social development," Christakis, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "Even if it were 'harmless,' the time spent on digital devices displaces these interactions."

Beyond just limiting screen time, parents should concentrate on creating screen-free times in children's daily routines, said Dr. Jenny Radesky of the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.



A group photo from the event

Pakistani Banking & Finance Professionals in Kuwait (PBFPK) organizes Iftar dinner

The Pakistani Banking and Finance Professionals in Kuwait (PBFPK), the prominent forum that assembles Pakistani leaders of finance, organized an Iftar gathering for its members with great holy spirit.

HE Ghulam Dastgir, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, was the chief guest. Ashar

Shahzad, Deputy Head of Mission, Dr Umar Javed, Community Welfare Attaché and Naveed Saber, Trade Officer from Embassy of Pakistan also graced the event.

A large number of members and media representatives attended the Iftar. Executive members of PBFPK welcomed all the guests.

HE Ghulam Dastgir, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, upon his arrival met with every single member, appreciated and was happy to see the participation by large number of PBFPK members. Later His Excellency socialized with the guests and had informal discussion with members.

Most US kids not meeting sleep, exercise targets

NEW YORK, May 19, (RTRS): Just one in 20 US children and teens gets the amount of sleep, exercise and screen time that doctors recommend for optimal health, a new study suggests.

Children and teens are supposed to get at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day and limit screen time to less than two hours. Kids ages 6 to 12 old also need 9 to 12 hours of sleep, while teens need 8 to 10 hours nightly.

Too little sleep or exercise, or too much screen time, can increase their risk of chronic health problems. These include obesity, mental health issues like anxiety and depression, poor academic achievement and unhealthy behaviors like smoking and drinking, the study team notes in JAMA Pediatrics.

Taken in isolation, these recommendations have been hard for many children and teens to achieve and doctors have long been aware of this problem, said lead study author Gregory Knell of the University of Texas Health Science Center in Dallas.

"Our study, however, analyzed the prevalence of meeting ALL three of these recommendations simultaneously," Knell said by email. "This is important because there is evidence that not spending the optimal time in all three behaviors has a stronger effect on health outcomes than not spending the optimal time in any one of the behaviors, independently."

Study

For the study, researchers examined data on 59,397 kids and teens who participated in nationwide surveys in 2011, 2013, 2015 or 2017.

Overall, just 3 percent of girls and 7 percent of boys spent the optimal time sleeping and being physically active while limiting screen time.

Compared to participants age 14 or younger, 16-year-olds were 23 percent less likely to get the right amounts of sleep, exercise and screen time, while 17-year-olds had 46 percent lower odds.

Non-white youth were also less likely than white counterparts to achieve

all three goals: black children and teens had 69 percent lower odds; Asian young people had a 63 percent lower chance, and Hispanic youth had a 33 percent lower likelihood.

Obese youth were 43 percent less likely to meet all three targets than children at a healthy weight, while overweight kids were 20 percent less likely to manage this.

The study wasn't designed to examine why young people fail to get enough sleep or exercise, or why they spend too much time staring at screens. And, it's also not clear from the study whether the failure to meet all three targets was due to missing just one recommendation or all of them.

The study also was not designed to prove whether or how failing to meet all three targets might directly impact physical or mental health.

Still, the results suggest that many parents have more work to do to encourage kids to get enough rest and exercise and spend less time staring at screens, said Asheley Skinner, a

researcher at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, who wasn't involved in the study.

Schools may also be part of the problem, because they start too early to allow teens to get enough sleep, Skinner said by email.

Also:

WASHINGTON: A federal judge is siding with public health groups suing the Food and Drug Administration to begin reviewing thousands of e-cigarettes on the US market.

The ruling handed down Wednesday in district court states that the agency shirked its legal duty when it postponed reviewing all US vaping products by several years.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and other groups filed the federal lawsuit in Maryland last year. The groups say the lack of FDA oversight has led to an explosion in underage vaping by teenagers, threatening to hook a generation of Americans on nicotine.

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