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Is Screen Exposure Completely Harmful in Children?

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ABSTRACT

It would be a very correct approach to approach screen exposure in children more analytically, to get rid of the monotonous perspective on its benefits and possible harms, and to guide or help the child with this awareness, knowing that its positive aspects are much higher than expected.

Dear Editor,

The issue of screen exposure in children has been discussed for years. In addition to video and print media, publications and posts that denigrate screen exposure on social media attract high attention. In children, especially in problems related to asociality and estrangement from family, screen exposure is a ready-made culprit that will be blamed and will not be answered in return. The relationship between screen exposure and autism and obesity is frequently emphasized. In fact, a prohibitionist mentality sentence such as "children should not be exposed to screens for more than 1 hour a day", originating from unknown origins, unrelated to science, and having no source, is frequently featured in the media. So is screen exposure in children really a bad thing?

Research on screen exposure is mostly based on surveys. In the surveys, an intention to direct is already evident in the questions directed to the parents rather than the children themselves. The parent who answers the questions also scores the survey in a way that can easily avoid being the cause of problems with the child. This situation makes it easier for statistical analysis results to be against screen exposure in a study where there is no reference other than the answers and no scientific evidence.

In surveys on screen exposure, some questions may be inappropriate, which may result in incomplete analysis. For example, questions about whether the child has a mobile phone or whether there is a television in his room do not provide data on screen exposure. While some surveys do not ask whether the child plays computer games or not, the question of how many hours a day he watches television is included, resulting in a research that goes far beyond its purpose.

Regarding screen exposure, it is first important what causes screen exposure, that is, what constitutes the significant part of the child's screen exposure. Does the child spend more time on communication applications on the mobile phone, spend time on social media on the phone, play games on the phone, tablet or computer for a long time, or watch television too much? It is necessary to consider each of these separately. For example, if the problem of the child being asocial is being examined, it may be revealed that playing games is the main reason for this. If the child spends time with communication applications, that child was not actually asocial in the first place, or maybe even too social, but the family is not aware of it. In addition, does the child who spends a lot of time on social media spend his time just watching funny videos or does he share things himself? Making this distinction in detail can easily provide us with many scientific data. In addition to all these, the age of the child should also be a variable that provides the basic distinction in these studies. It is not normal for a 5-year-old child and a 17-year-old "child" to be subjected to the same type of screen exposure or should not be evaluated in the same way.

While evaluating the screen exposure accusations with the answers received from the parents, parents are not asked how much screen exposure they have experienced. Nowadays, it is overlooked that adults are also busy on the phone. There is no awareness on this issue, but the issue of children's screen exposure is intensively addressed. If parents were first asked

about their own screen exposure during the survey, more "fair" answers could be obtained in subsequent questions.

Aside from the fact that the studies on screen exposure are so biased, incomplete and inaccurate, the fact that screen exposure may have benefits is not included in the studies at all. Raising awareness of the following possible benefits of children's screen exposure can lead to good change in society:

- A 5-6 year old child learns to read, write and even use a keyboard through a communication application (which, considering the society, can be estimated to be high).
- A child who starts to live with technology at an early age may become skilled in this field in the future.
- The child has become very knowledgeable about smartphone or tablet applications and may have a profession in this field in the future. Being able to increase his/her knowledge about producing media content on social media may also be an advantage in this regard.
- Considering that software is one of the rare sectors on the rise, especially during the pandemic, educating children in this field and paving the way for them in this regard can enable them to use a great potential in their lives.
- A child can learn a huge amount of information from the internet and social media.
- By using social media a lot, children can increase their English knowledge at an incredible speed.
- He can be an extremely social person by using social media effectively.
- With social media interactions, the circle of possible future business or collaboration can expand. Aside from the fact that there are people who earn money directly from social media, it is also easy for those who start their own business to develop their business many times beyond their local potential through social media.
- The child may develop to react to some negative social or political events and become an important individual for society.
- Conversely, it should be considered that people in the In this sense, it is inevitable that the knowledge level of children is far above that of previous generations.

As a result, it would be a very correct approach to approach screen exposure in children more analytically, to get rid of the monotonous perspective on its benefits and possible harms, and to guide or help the child with this awareness, knowing that its positive aspects are much higher than expected.

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