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Heavy use of iPads causing children to lose basic skills in the real world

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(NaturalNews) An increasing number of infants do not have the motor skills necessary to play with building blocks because of an "addiction" to tablet computers and smartphones, according to a teacher's organization.

Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper reported that the group notes that many children aged 3-4 years old can "swipe a screen," but they have little to no dexterity in their fingers because they have spent too many hours glued to an iPad or other tablet screen.

Members of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) are also warning that some older children are not able to complete traditional pen-and-paper exams because their memories have eroded due to overexposure to screen-based technology. As such, they are calling on parents to limit their children's tablet usage and even shut off the Wi-Fi during the evening to help address the problem.

The recommendations were made after study figures showed that the proportion of households with tablet computers more than doubled from 20 percent to 51 percent last year.

'No manipulative skills'

Developmental experts have warned that the growth in tablet use is having serious side effects on the social and physical development of kids. Last year, *The Telegraph* reported, a physician claimed that rising numbers of children and young people, including one child aged just four years old, required therapy for compulsive addictive behavior after being exposed to digital devices and the Internet since birth.

In addressing the ATL's annual conference recently in Manchester, Colin Kinney, a teacher from Northern Ireland, said his colleagues "talk of pupils who come into their classrooms after spending most of the previous night playing computer games and whose attention span is so limited that they may as well not be there."

"I have spoken to a number of nursery teachers who have concerns over the increasing numbers of young pupils who can swipe a screen but have little or

no manipulative [skills](#) to play with building blocks or the like, or the pupils who cannot socialize with other pupils but whose parents talk proudly of their ability to use a tablet or smartphone," he added.

In addressing ATL members, Kinney said the "brilliant computer skills" demonstrated by a number of students was "outweighed by their deteriorating skills in pen and paper exams because they rely on instant support of the computer and are often unable to apply what they should have learned from their textbooks."

The teachers group said it backed plans to create new guidance to be issued to teachers and parents alike, showing them the "best way forward" to handle children who have become "addicted" to [iPads](#) and other devices.

'It is our job to make sure that the technology is being used wisely'

Another Northern Ireland teacher, Mark Montgomery, said overexposing children to technology has been linked to obesity and weight gain, aggressive behavior, repetitive strain injury and fatigue. He asked parents to turn off Wi-Fi overnight to prevent [children](#) from staying up too late to play games on the Internet or on tablets.

"It is our job to make sure that the technology is being used wisely and productively and that pupils are not making backward steps and getting obsessed and exhibiting aggressive and anti-social behaviours," he said. "In the same way we can use a brick to either break a window or build a house, digital technology can be used for good or bad, and teachers can and should help their pupils make positive choices so they have positive experiences."

Some teachers have said that the technology of iPads and other tablets has been a boon to education, by connecting kids to all sorts of new and enhancing experiences. But increasingly, the data show that too much technology is having a harmful effect on our children.

Sources:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

<http://www.foxnews.com>

<http://www.longisland.com>