

# 6 Negative Effects of Too Much Screen Time For Kids

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## Sleep Deprivation

Without question, the screens of many devices are causing a crisis of sleep deprivation for all age groups. However, the loss of sleep is most detrimental to children.

Kids need more sleep than adults due to their developing body and mind. The average child needs 10-12 hours of sleep each night in order for them to grow and develop properly, but screen time is shaving off hours of that much-needed sleep time. The average child is constantly sleep deprived and trying to learn, grow and develop on 6-8 hours of sleep per night at the most.

Children who sleep with electronic devices in their bedroom get less sleep than those who leave the devices in another room of the home at night. Not only are the children playing games and texting when they should be asleep, but the blue light emitted from the devices hinders sleep even after the device is shut off.

All electronics, including cell phones, tablets, iPads and TVs, emit a blue light from the screen. The body interprets that blue light as daylight and the brain sends out the signal to wake up. Instead of being sleepy at bedtime, the child is now wide awake even when the electronic screen is shut off.

A kid who is suffering from sleep deprivation will typically be cranky, have an increased risk of obesity, have a short attention span, lack decision-making skills, have increased health problems, be lethargic and do less well in school.

# Obesity

The use of any device with an electronic screen seems to require the need to sit down, or at least be still, while using it. The sedentary nature, combined with ads for high-calorie junk food, often leads to childhood obesity.

Children are naturally full of energy and have an inborn need to run, jump and otherwise be active. When that normal desire to be active is curtailed and they sit on their haunches for hours on end, they will become overweight.

Obesity leads to a variety of health problems, including diabetes, joint problems and heart disease. Childhood obesity is an epidemic in many countries, and too much screen time is contributing to this.

# Vision Problems

There used to be a 20/20/20 rule for those who had to spend long hours working in front of their computer screens – every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. That 20/20/20 rule was implemented to help prevent eye strain and potential vision problems in the future.

Kids won't take their eyes off the electronic screen for 20 seconds, even if they have heard of the 20/20/20 rule. Immediate eye strain and pain can occur from staring at the screen too long, and it's too soon to know what type of vision problems the future may hold for those kids who have too much screen time now.

# Aches and Pains

*Phone neck*, *text thumb* and several other new medical terms had to be coined to describe the various aches and pains which are developing as a result of too much screen time. The head, neck and wrists are often held at odd angles, and thumbs are used in ways they were never meant to be. It all adds up to childhood aches and pains which will worsen as the child gets older.

Back pain, arthritis, repetitive motion syndrome and migraines are just some of the health problems kids who have too much screen time today may develop in the future.

## Loss of Social Skills

Kids who spend too much time using devices frequently lack the social skills that are needed to help them develop into well-rounded adults. Social skills, people skills and the ability to interact with others of all ages is lacking in kids who spend too much interacting with an electronic device and have limited face-to-face contact with people.

By not developing the ability to interact with others face-to-face, future adult relationships for the child may be impeded. Employment, romance, friendships and simple social etiquette will suffer if a child never develops normal social skills during childhood.

## Aggression

Lots of video games feature violence. Even very young kids are drawn to games that use weapons. The more violent and bloody, the more popular the video game typically becomes.

That can translate into aggression. Studies show that teens who spend a lot of time watching violent TV shows and/or playing violent video games are far more likely to be aggressive both in the home and at school. These aggressive teens fight with their siblings and peers, argue with teachers and parents and just always seems to be an outburst waiting to happen.

*Jeffrey Green writes for [NaturalBlaze.com](http://NaturalBlaze.com) where this article first appeared.*

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