ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO READ: REDUCING GADGET USE AND PROMOTING BOOKS

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Annotation: This paper examines the impact of excessive gadgets use on children's use cognitive, language, and socio-emotionaal development and reviews strategies to promote book reading.

Keywords: reading, books, children, technology,, gadgets, education, imagination,critical thinking, language development, screen time

In the modern digital era, the rapid growth of technology has significantly changed children's daily lives. Smartphones, tablets, computers, and other digital devices are now

accessible even to preschoolers. While these tools can be beneficial for learning when used wisely, their excessive use has become a serious issue worldwide [1, p. 45]. Research shows that children are spending far more time on gadgets than reading books. This shift has a direct impact on their cognitive development, communication abilities, and emotional growth. Books, on the other hand, provide mental stimulation, develop imagination, and foster long-term concentration. Reading helps children build language skills, expand their vocabulary, and understand the world around them in a deeper way [2, p. 112].Encouraging children to read is not just about improving academic performance -it is about shaping independent thinkers, creative minds, and emotionally intelligent individuals. Therefore, one of the most important tasks of parents, teachers, and society as a whole is to reduce gadget dependence and increase book engagement among children.

Gadget overuse can affect children physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Many children spend hours in front of screens, which leads to decreased attention span, weaker memory, and lower motivation to read [3, p. 208]. They become accustomed to fast, colorful, and short content, which makes it harder to focus on complex ideas or long texts.

Psychologists warn that prolonged gadget exposure can cause emotional numbness. Children may become easily irritated, impatient, and less empathetic. Unlike reading, which requires imagination and reflection, gadgets often deliver information passively and quickly, leaving little room for deep thinking [5, p. 121].

In addition, reading strengthens emotional intelligence. Through stories, children learn about human emotions, values, and cultural traditions. This helps them understand others better and build healthier social relationships. Reading also promotes patience and focus - qualities that are often diminished by fast digital content [7, p. 200].

Although gadgets are often seen as distractions, they can also be powerful tools for encouraging reading if used wisely. E-books, interactive storytelling apps, and audiobooks can be integrated into children's daily lives in a structured way [10, p. 33]. For example, children who resist traditional reading might enjoy listening to audiobooks or reading on an e-reader. Teachers can use digital platforms to combine entertainment with education. The key is control, structure, and content quality. Not all screen time is harmful -but unregulated and unlimited screen time is.Parents should carefully monitor what their children access and make sure that technology is used as a bridge to books, not as a replacement.

From a psychological point of view, reading stimulates brain regions responsible for language, reasoning, and memory. It encourages deep cognitive processing and strengthens neural connections [12, p. 104]. On the contrary, passive screen use weakens these skills over time.

Educational experts emphasize that early reading habits have a lifelong effect. A child who reads regularly from an early age is more likely to succeed academically and professionally in adulthood. Moreover, reading develops self-discipline, creativity, and emotional resilience, which gadgets alone cannot provide.

The Role of Government and Policy

to shape modern childhood, but they should never replace books. Reading plays a unique role in developing critical thinking, language skills, imagination, and emotional intelligence. By reducing gadget dependence and promoting reading, we invest in the intellectual and cultural future of the next generation.

Parents, teachers, and policymakers must work together to create an environment where books are valued, reading is celebrated, and technology is used wisely. A child who grows up loving books will grow into an adult who thinks deeply, communicates clearly, and contributes positively to society.

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