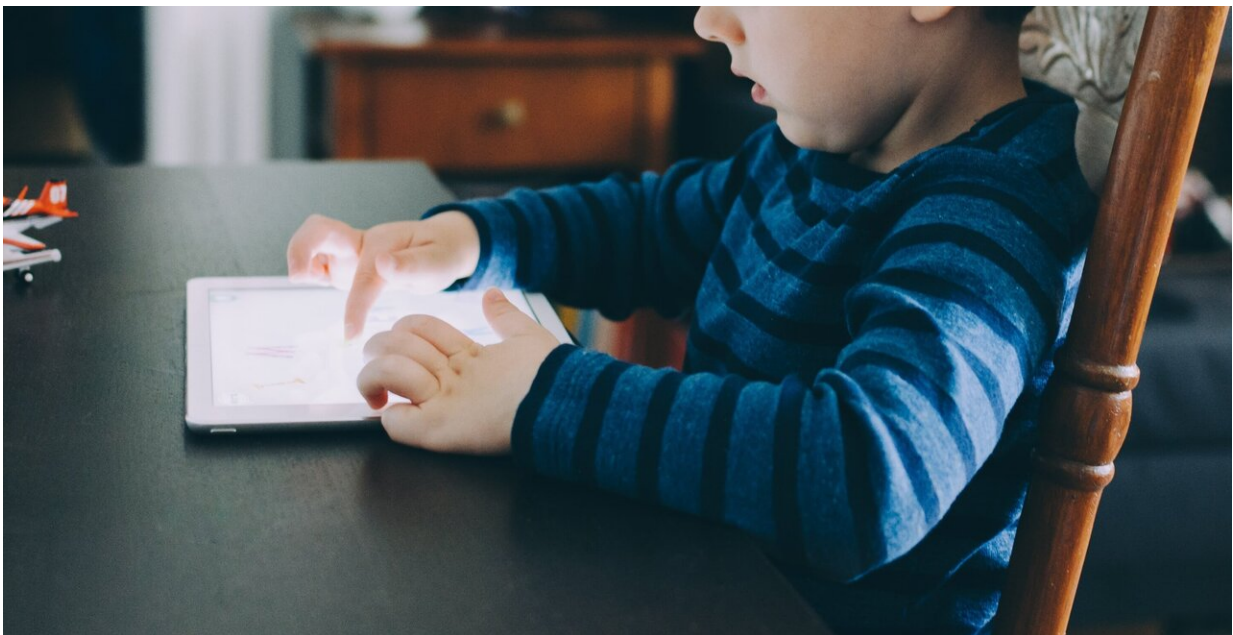


High daily screen time linked to cognitive and behavioral problems in children born extremely preterm

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Among 6- and 7-year-olds who were born extremely preterm—before the 28th week of pregnancy—those who had more than two hours of screen time a day were more likely to have deficits in overall IQ, executive functioning (problem solving skills), impulse control, and attention, according to a study funded by the National Institutes of

Health. Similarly, those who had a television or computer in their bedrooms were more likely to have problems with impulse control and paying attention. The findings suggest that high amounts of screen time may exacerbate the cognitive deficits and behavioral problems common to children born extremely preterm.

The study was conducted by Betty R. Vohr, M.D., and colleagues. It appears in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Funding was provided by NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; and National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.

Previous studies have linked high amounts of screen time among children born full-term to language and developmental, behavioral and other problems. In the current study, researchers analyzed data from a study of children born at 28 weeks or earlier. Of 414 children, 238 had more than two hours of screen time per day and 266 had a television or computer in their bedrooms. Compared to children with less screen time per day, those with high amounts of screen time scored an average deficit of nearly 8 points on global executive function percentile scores, roughly 0.8 points lower on [impulse control](#) (inhibition) and more than 3 points higher on inattention. Children with a television or computer in their bedrooms also scored lower on measures of inhibition, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

The authors concluded that the findings support the need for physicians to discuss the potential effects of screen time with families of children born extremely preterm.

More information: Vohr, BE, et al. Association of high screen-time use with school-age cognitive, executive function, and behavior outcomes in extremely preterm children. *JAMA Pediatrics*.2021. [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2041](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2041)

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