



iKids: Investigating Kids' Interaction with Digital Screens

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

We want to invite you and your child to take part in the iKids Study!

What's the study about?

We are exploring children's use of smartphones and tablets and gathering information to learn about their cognitive development and health outcomes. We're aiming to improve health guidance in this area for parents and childcare professionals.

Who can take part?

We're inviting families with **3-year old children** to take part. Children can take part whether or not they use devices – we're interested in all experiences!

Where will the session take place?

We are running sessions in a variety of venues! Further information is provided in our consent form ([LINK](#)).

How long will the session be?

The session will last around 75 - 90 minutes.

Do you have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you and your child would like to take part. If you do decide to take part, you and your child will both be free to withdraw at any time.

What will your child do?

Children will take part in fun activities that measure cognitive skills—such as memory, vocabulary, spatial awareness, and numeracy. We also do some activities that assess motor skills (e.g., balancing, jumping, and fine finger movements) and measure height and weight. These games have been a real hit with children so far!

Each child is offered a special "magic belt" (an activity monitor) and a superhero mask to go with it. The belt is like a pedometer—it tracks when children are sitting still, moving around, or sleeping. Just to reassure you, there is no GPS in the belt. We ask that children wear the belt for **one week**, aiming for at least one 24-hour window of continuous use, but it is not a problem if a child doesn't want to wear the belt (although most children find them exciting!). We will provide you with information on how to return the belt during your session.

What will you do?

We will ask you to complete two short questionnaires. One about your family characteristics and own use of devices, and another about your child's social behaviours (i.e., interactions with other children). We'll also ask you some questions about your interactions with your child at home.

If your child uses phones/tablets, during your visit, we will help you install an app on **all devices your child uses**. This app (called EARS) can be found in your usual app store. This app records **how long different apps are used** and can be deleted after one week.

It's very important that you bring these devices with you to your appointment. If your child uses another device (i.e., from another parent), we will give you clear instructions on how to install the app when you get home.

A few important things to note:

1. We only see the names of the apps and how much time is spent on them, not the content!
2. This data is not linked to children's names – it is completely anonymised.
3. The individual data will never be shared with anyone – we will only look at data at the group level (i.e., hundreds of participants at a time).



Thank you!

While taking part, your child will be rewarded with certificates and stamps. **You'll receive 2 x £50 vouchers (£50 at your first visit, £50 next year at your second visit).**

FAQs:

1) Will any judgements be made about my child's use (or non-use) of devices?

Absolutely not! We want to emphasise that all data is anonymised straight away, so we won't know how much time individual children spend using devices/ using certain apps. We explore the data as one large group!

For our project to be successful, we need children who use devices often, children who don't use them at all and **everything in between!!**

2) Has this study been approved?

Yes! This work is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), a research partner of the NHS, and is led by Professor Liane Azevedo. The project has received ethical approval from the Ethics and Research Governance Committee at Sheffield Hallam University (Ethics number: ER69550320).

3) Will you share the findings with us?

Yes, we will prepare newsletters and infographics to summarise the study's results. These materials will be distributed to parents and childcare settings.

Where can I find out more?

Further details can be found on our website at www.ikidsstudy.com. We have dedicated pages for parents. If you have any questions, you can email us at ikids@shu.ac.uk.

How do we sign up?

To sign up, please [click here to complete a consent form for your child and book a session](#). A member of the iKids Team will then be in touch to confirm your booking!

Yours sincerely,

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