



Dear Parent/Caregiver,

iKids: Investigating Kids' Interaction with Digital Screens

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!

What do children do?

During our visit to your child's childcare setting, they will take part in fun 1:1 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!).

What do parents do?

After our visit to a childcare setting, you will get instructions to install an app on **all devices your child uses**. This all (called EARS) can be found in your usual app store. This app helps us **see how long different apps are used on children's devices**. You use this app for one week.

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).

Finally, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire and phone call with us (about 15 minutes).

Thank you: You'll receive 2 X £50 vouchers (£50 now, £50 next year when we repeat the activities)

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 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.

Don't just take our word for it!

We've received wonderful feedback from parents:

"After dinner last night she was role playing the tests she had done with you guys and making her me and her daddy do them so she must have enjoyed it 😊"

"Kids at nursery loved the belt - one called it fabulous!...We read the Super Hero Sam story tonight as one of her two activities and when asked to choose a book or jigsaw for the other bedtime activity she chose to read about Super Hero Sam again!"

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 scan the QR code at the bottom of this page to complete a consent form for your child. We'll let your childcare setting know that you're taking part!

Scan for our consent form!



Or visit www.tinyurl.com/iKidsParentConsent

Yours sincerely,

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