

# SCHOOL INFORMATION PACK



## **iKids: Investigating Kids' Interaction with Digital Screens**



# Visual Summary

We want to know how the use of tablets, ipads, and mobile phones impacts upon young children's development, behaviour and health

## What does taking part involve?

### Parents:

15 mins



Complete a questionnaire (online or on paper)



Answer some questions about interactions with their child (conducted face to face or over the phone)



Take a daily screenshot of battery usage for all iPads/iPhones child uses for 1 week

&/OR



Download an app on all devices the child uses to record child's usage for 1 week

### The child:

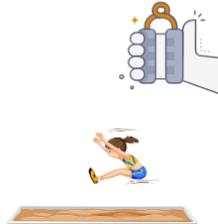
#### At school



Complete activities on an iPad to assess development



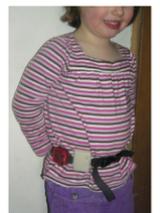
Have their height and weight measured



Complete a series of activities to measure their motor development



#### At home, out & about & at school



Wear an activity monitor for 1 week on their hip

### The school:



Provide EYFS profile data on the child's school readiness when available

### Teaching staff:

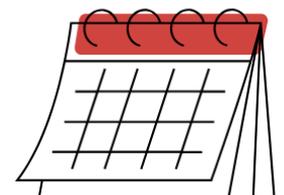


5 mins

Complete a questionnaire (online or on paper) about the child's social development

### When?

1 day visit to your setting





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## **Part 1. Introduction**

Tablets and mobile phones are common in young children's lives, but health guidance does not provide recommendations for how long young children should use these devices. Thus, policymakers, childcare providers and parents have asked for further information on their impact. The iKids research study is exploring children's use of smartphones and tablets and gathering information to learn about their cognitive development and health outcomes.

Some of your pupils in reception are enrolled in the iKids Research Study. Last year these pupils took part in the study at their nursery/preschool or childminders and now it is time to repeat the child's measurements. We would therefore like to invite you and your setting to take part in our research project.



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto on Pexels

Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this!



### **What is the purpose of this study?**

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 would we like to work with?**

We will only be taking measurements from those children who signed up and took part in the iKids study last year.



## Meet the Team

### **Prof Liane Azevedo**



Liane is a Professor at Sheffield Hallam University. Liane's research interest is in public health, particularly in promoting health in young children. She has worked in many studies involving interventions with children, targeting the increase in physical activity and the reduction in sedentary behaviour.

### **Dr Amy Hughes**



Amy is one of the Trial Managers for the iKids Team. She has experience conducting research with children and primary schools. She is interested in exploring how technology can be used to support children's learning.

### **Dr Colette Marr**



Colette is one of the trial managers for the iKids Team. She has experience conducting research with childminders and families with young children across Sheffield. She also spent two years as an Early Years Practitioner working in a Nursery.

### **Osla Campbell**



Osla is a Research Assistant at Sheffield Hallam University. She previously graduated from the University of Nottingham with an MSc in Natural Sciences, specialising in Psychology. She has experience working with ages 3-18, and is interested in physical activity and mental health.

### **Emma Lake**



Emma is a Research Assistant at Sheffield Hallam University and has just completed an MSc in Developmental Psychology at SHU. She has experience working with children aged 3-11 and is interested in social and cognitive development in early years.

### **Rachel Stamper**



Rachel is another of our Research Assistants and has also just completed an MSc in Developmental Psychology at SHU. She also works as a nursery practitioner and has done for several years.

### **Dr Eleanor Craig**



Ellie is a Research Fellow on the iKids project. She has experience in mental health and wellbeing research, as well as in examining child protection practices. Ellie has also worked with primary school-aged children to explore issues related to isolation and loneliness.



## **Part 3. What's involved?**

### **Rewards:**

To thank you for your participation, **your school will receive £50 after data collection.** Parents will also receive a **£50 high street e-voucher.** During data collection, children receive will be provided with a reward chart, stickers, a certificate and a dress-up face mask.

### **What will you need to do?**

If you agree to take part, we will ask you to:

1. Liaise with our Team about when the best times to conduct the research are for your setting and the children who have agreed to take part.

Working with each child takes approximately 1 hour. The amount of time we spend at your setting would depend on how many children attending your school are signed up to the iKids study.

2. Complete a short 5-minute questionnaire for each child with parental consent.
3. Be prepared to attach and reattach a physical activity monitor belt to children taking part in the study. They will be required to wear the belt for one week. Clear instructions on how to do so will be provided.

### **What will children do?**

We will repeat the measurements that the child undertook a year ago at their previous childcare setting. Therefore, all measurements are familiar to the child. We will use iPad games to assess different cognitive skills. These include vocabulary, numeracy, memory, and inhibition skills. These games take around 40 minutes.



We will measure each child's height and weight and their motor development using a series of games which measure their fine and gross motor skills. These games are estimated to take between 10-15 minutes.

Each child is offered a special "magic belt" (an activity monitor) and a superhero mask to go with it. The belt 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 will parents do?**

After our visit to your school, parents will get instructions to install an app on **all devices their child uses**. This app (called EARS Mobile Sensing) can be found in their usual app store. This app helps us **see how long different apps are used for on children's devices**. Families use this app for one week. All families are familiar with this app having used it when they took part in the study last year.

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



## **Part 3. Additional Information.**

### **How will information be collected?**

Experienced and trained researchers will take all the measurements. We will make sure that we respect the children's personalities and preferences, and we will not pressure them to take part if they do not want to. All measurements will be completed in a shared space within the school. All researchers involved in this study have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. If you have any concerns about the measures we're taking, please feel free to discuss them with us.

### **Where will the study take place?**

For the most part, data collection will take place within your school however we will be measuring children's smartphone/tablet use, which we expect will mostly be in the home, as well as out and about. Children will also be asked to wear an activity belt for 7 days which will involve times when they are at home, in school and when they are out and about. We will also be asking staff and parents to complete an online questionnaire which can be completed at a time and place convenient for them.

### **How often will we have to take part, and for how long?**

You will be required to take part on one occasion. A member of the research team will contact you to arrange a suitable date and time for data collection.

### **Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?**

Parents may feel uncomfortable downloading an app onto their electronic devices however they are already familiar with this process from last year. Nevertheless, we try to assure them that this app (EARS) has been designed for research purposes and is only being used to track the duration the device is used, as well as the type of apps in use. Use of the app has been scrutinised and approved by Sheffield Hallam University's Digital Technology Services, and the study has undergone rigorous ethical review (Ethics number: ER69550320). EARS is GDPR compliant, and they will be asked to download the



app through Google Play or the App Store, which also ensures additional data quality control through Apple or Google. Parents will be provided with clear instructions for installing and removing the app.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

By taking part in this research, you will contribute to our understanding on the use of smartphones and tablets and cognitive development. We hope that the findings will help to inform public health guidance on children's device use. Settings, parents and children will also receive vouchers for participating.

### **Do the children have to take part?**

No. If, on the day, a child decides they do not wish to take part after parents have consented, they will not be required to do so.

### **Right to withdraw:**

If you agree for your setting to take part in the study and later decide that you no longer wish your setting to be involved, that is absolutely fine, and no further measurements will be collected from your setting.



Photo by RDNE Stock Project on Pexels



### **How will the information be used?**

During the study, only members of the research team will have access to any of your information. All the information about your participation in this study will be kept confidential. Throughout the research families will be given a participant identification number, and their name will not be used to ensure responses remain anonymous.

The information that is collected will be kept strictly confidential, anonymised and stored on secure drive at Sheffield Hallam University. As the data is anonymous, it means that it cannot be traced back to you at any point. To maintain contact with settings and parents during the study we will require an email address and telephone number. All identifiable personal data will be kept in a separate file from the other data and destroyed in August 2027 upon completion of data collection.

At the end of the project, fully anonymised data will be securely archived in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Data Archive and kept for ten years. It is likely that this data will be of interest to other researchers in the future. Consequently, at the end of the project, fully anonymised data will also be deposited in a community recognised data repository to allow other researchers to use the data in the future.

The findings from this research will be published in scientific journals and presented at academic and relevant conferences. Additionally, the results will help to inform policy briefs for health and educational organisations. Findings will be shared at Knowledge Café events and communicated to early years settings and parents via newsletters and websites. It will not be possible to identify you or your child in any of these presentations or publications.

### **How can I find out about the results of the study?**

Upon completion of the study, we will share the study findings on the study website [www.ikidsstudy.com](http://www.ikidsstudy.com).



### Who is funding the research?

The research is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/>. The NIHR is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to fund research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care.

### What happens next?

If you are happy for your setting to participate then please complete the consent form.

If you would like more information on the study, please contact the research team by telephone or email (details below) and we will be happy to discuss the work further.

iKids Team

Sheffield Hallam University

Phone: 07917 846 358

e-mail: [ikids@shu.ac.uk](mailto:ikids@shu.ac.uk)

Website: [www.ikidsstudy.com](http://www.ikidsstudy.com)

#### **You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:**

- you have a query about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data

[DPO@shu.ac.uk](mailto:DPO@shu.ac.uk)

#### **You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Mayur Ranchordas) if:**

- you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated

[ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk](mailto:ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk)

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT  
Telephone: 0114 225 5555

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this study.**