

IKIDS

NEWSLETTER

**SPRING
2026**

Welcome Back!

Dear **Parents, Early Years Practitioners and Health Professionals,**

We wanted to share some exciting updates from the iKids team!

In this edition, we'll share updates on the progress of our studies and on how the iKids team has been building new connections with early years practitioners, healthcare professionals, and researchers across the region.

As conversations around young children's use of tablets and smartphones continue to evolve, your involvement in the iKids Study is helping contribute to an important and growing area of research. Thank you for continuing to support us!

We would also like to give a special thank you to our Parent and Public Involvement (PPI) group for their continued ideas, feedback, and support throughout the project. Their input has played an important role in helping shape iKids along the way.



Why Research Like This Matters

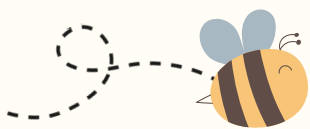


**Department
for Education**

Recently, **new guidance** around screen use in early childhood has been shared by the **Department for Education**. As technology continues to evolve rapidly, guidance and recommendations are also continuing to develop.

There is **still so much we do not yet fully understand** about how interactive electronic devices fit into children's lives and development. This is exactly why the research happening at iKids is so important!

By taking part in the project, **you are helping build the evidence** needed to better understand children's digital experiences in today's world.



Ongoing Study 1: Understanding Children's Device Use

Data collection is still underway for our largest study! Our baseline recruitment of 3-year-old children continues to grow thanks to the incredible support from families, early years settings, and NHS Partners.

Where we're working with families:

1. Early Years Settings:

- Childminders, school nurseries, and day nurseries.
- We complete activities with children during a visit to their setting.
- Parents complete questionnaires and install the EARS digital activity app at home.

2. One-to-One Family Appointments:

- Available at Family Hubs, university campuses, and other community venues.
- All child and parent activities are completed on the same day. At home, children wear the belt and parents ensure the EARS app keeps running.

Numbers of Children Recruited so Far:



1 Year Follow-Ups Have Started

Not only are we still collecting data from 3-year-old children, but we are now also beginning follow-up visits with children who took part last year, now that they are 4 years old.

It has been wonderful seeing many of these children again and hearing about how they have changed over the past year!

If it's been almost a year since we last saw your child, look out for an email from our Trial Manager, Colette. She'll be sending over all the details you need to get involved again.



Thank You To Our NHS Partners

In our last newsletter, we shared that local GP sites would soon begin sending SMS invitations directly to families about the project. We are delighted to say that this is now fully underway and has made a huge difference to recruitment!

A special thank you to our new partner, the **South West Yorkshire NHS Foundation Trust!** We are also incredibly grateful for the support of the Primary Care Networks in Sheffield, Wakefield, and Doncaster, along with the many GP practices and healthcare teams supporting iKids across the region.

Their support has helped many more families hear about the project and has played a major role in helping our recruitment continue to grow.



Help Us Spread the Word!

Baseline Data Collection Extended until December 2026!

We are pleased to share that baseline recruitment for our ongoing study *Understanding Children's Device Use* has now been extended until **December 2026**. This means there is still plenty of time for new families to get involved.

If you know a family with a child who has recently turned 3 – or who will turn 3 before December 2026 – invite them to complete our sign up form and we'll be in touch.

Parent / Carer Sign-Up: www.tinyurl.com/iKidsJoin

Word of mouth remains one of the biggest ways families hear about the project, so **thank you for continuing to share information with others!**



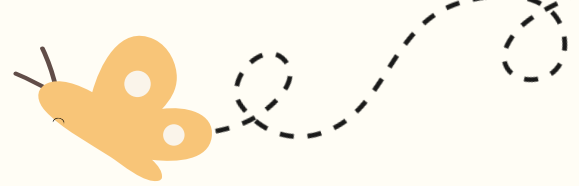
Ongoing Study 2: Observing Device Use at Home

We've loved meeting families and learning more about how devices fit into everyday home life. Thank you to all the families who have welcomed us into their routines and shared their experiences with us.

We're excited to share that we have now reached our recruitment target for the study, with **15 of the 20 family visits already completed**. Parent interviews have been going really well, and some interesting themes around home life and screen use are already beginning to emerge.



Dr Eleanor Craig will soon begin her maternity leave before returning later to continue the project. We'd like to wish Ellie all the very best during this exciting time!



Where We've Been Sharing Our Findings

Royal College of Psychiatrists President's Lecture – January 2026

Professor Liane Azevedo was specially invited to present at the President's Lecture of the **Royal College of Psychiatrists** in Glasgow. Her talk generated lots of discussion and interest from attendees.



SCYPHeR Research Day – February 2026

Dr Colette Marr and Dr Amy Hughes presented findings from our systematic review study at the **South Yorkshire Children and Young People's Health Research (SCYPHeR) Research Day**. It was a great opportunity to share our work with researchers and healthcare professionals interested in children's health and wellbeing!



DHSC North East & Yorkshire Webinar – March 2026

Our team also presented a webinar hosted by the **Department of Health and Social Care's North East & Yorkshire Regional Team**. We shared updates from our research and had thoughtful conversations with professionals working with children and families across the region.



Stronger Practice Hub Webinar – April 2026

The team took part in a webinar with the **Stronger Practice Hub**, sharing updates from across our projects. We had some fantastic discussions with practitioners about their experiences and perspectives surrounding young children's use of tablets and smartphones.



LGA Babies and Children's Public Health Network – April 2026

In April, Professor Liane Azevedo and Dr Eleanor Craig presented the iKids study at the **Local Government Association's** Babies and Children's Public Health Network meeting, sharing updates on our research.



The Conversation – May 2026

THE CONVERSATION

We recently published a piece in **The Conversation** which moves beyond "counting minutes" to focus on how we use screens. We share five practical tips for parents, including the benefits of co-viewing and mindful "digital modeling."

What We'll Be Watching This Summer!

With **Toy Story 5** on the horizon, the iKids team have already started discussing a team cinema trip!

The upcoming film is set to explore how traditional toys compete with modern technology for children's attention – a topic that certainly sounds familiar to our team!

We're looking forward to seeing Woody, Buzz, and the gang back on the big screen.



More Lovely Feedback From Parents!

We have even more wonderful comments from families taking part in our ongoing study *Understanding Children's Device Use*

"We really enjoyed taking part and looking forward to hearing about the findings in the future. The toddler participation was really well thought out and child really liked having the superhero belt and reading the story and telling her friends. Hopefully some of them come and join the study."



"Really positive. I've been kept informed throughout. We are really happy to take part in the study and feel it is important to understand the impact of screen time on preschool children."

"My child loved taking part in the study last time and was made to feel very special by wearing the superhero belt. I loved how child friendly the study was. Thank you! She also enjoyed spending the voucher to buy a new baby."

Contact Us!

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Created by
Dr Amy Hughes – May 2026