

Technology and children essay example

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



According to Howard Gardner, the increased use of technology, social media and digital devices by children and teenagers in the 21st century, is “epochal change”. (Clinton, 2012) It goes without saying that the rapid pace of technological advancements have improved peoples’ standard of living by offering them easier access to communication, knowledge, transportation, etc. However, the explosive growth of this sector has a flip side to it. The advancements in technology and the increased use of social media/internet/video games are causing devastating impacts on young people and their minds; in addition, it stunts their developmental and learning process. Going back 20 years from now and reflecting on the lives people led before, one would realize how uncomplicated and unfussy their lives were, parents inculcated moral values in their children and guided them to do good deeds. They were taught to abide by the norms of society and held the general ethical values in high regard. Their developmental process was quite different than it is now. Parents paid great attention to their child’s physical, psychological and behavioral learning. They encouraged them to participate in physical sports and games that would build a child’s mental capabilities and also give them physical strength. Children followed a healthy routine, which taught them the importance of time management and organization. In today’s day and age, it can be seen commonly that teenagers and even children below the age of thirteen carry the latest cell phones, iPods, tablets, and other digital devices. They remain engaged in texting, ‘facebooking’, playing video games and other activities that involve the internet and digital devices. Such pursuits are highly counterproductive to a child’s development. Constant use of cell phones and computers hampers a child’s

sensory and motor development and it also acts as a barrier to learning and building strong human relationships and connections.

The problems that result from increased use of these gadgets have far reaching consequences, both on the physical as well as the mental fitness of a child. Research indicates that too much exposure to multimedia content and hypertext can cause severe effect on a child's cognitive development. Studies have found out, children who use social media and the internet heavily, face problems with concentration, have limited attention spans and poor focus, moreover, they are unable to grasp concepts easily and may face difficulties in comprehension. These later on develop into full mental disorders such as autism, ADHD, coordination problems and other learning difficulties. (Rowan, 2013)

Constant use of technology may also weaken a child's immune system overtime, making him or her more vulnerable and susceptible to serious epidemics such as diabetes and child obesity. Furthermore, children are at risk of developing anxiety and stress related disorders; they may face depression, restlessness and sleep disorders.

Not only does technology causes negative impacts on a child's physical growth but it also influences his or her social development and human relationships. Youngsters who are constantly involved in video games, chatting, texting and surfing the internet eventually grow up to become isolated individuals. They are cut off from reality and their surroundings, and have limited human connectedness. This causes them to lose confidence and have low self-esteem. They feel shy while interacting with others and usually carry a negative image of themselves. Such socially inexperienced children

will face deeper problems in the future if they are not addressed right away. Other than the negative impacts of technology stated above, there are far graver consequences of the use of technology, particularly the internet, by young children. Since parents now find it difficult to regulate their child's online activities, their children are more prone to commit or be a victim of cyber crimes. The rate of cyber bullying and cyber crimes has increased by an enormous magnitude. In addition, there is a huge amount of inappropriate information and data available on the internet, which is clearly not safe for child viewing, pornographic and violent content is a prime example. Such information poses immense threat to a child's mental well-being and plays a key role in developing his or her mind and personality. As a result the society would experience children growing up to be violent, perverted and addicted.

Several measures can be taken to deal with the problem of the effects of rising technology on children. One must first seek to understand the four fundamental factors that play a vital role in the development processes of a child. These include movement, sense of touch, social relationships and connection to the nature. It is highly crucial that children build up their physical and muscle strength to fight against diseases and other ailments. The sense of touch strengthens a child's sensory and motor processes. Having strong and steady personal relationships is very important in the emotional and interpersonal development of children. And lastly, having some form of connection with the nature, for instance by encouraging children to play outdoor sports, can further develop their personalities, making them calm and collected individuals. This is only possible if a

collective and collaborative effort is taken that involves all stakeholders, namely parents, teachers, policymakers, technology experts and innovators and most importantly, the younger generation themselves.

References

Clinton, C., opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Chelsea Clinton., & Steyer., J. (2012, May 21). Is the Internet hurting children?. CNN. Retrieved June 1, 2014, from <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/21/opinion/clinton-steyer-internet-kids/>

Rowan, C. (2013, May 29). The Impact of Technology on the Developing Child. The Huffington Post. Retrieved June 1, 2014, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/technology-children-negative-impact_b_3343245.html