

# Hostages to Handheld Devices

Mobile phones, tablets and computers are now so popular that some children spend more time playing games on them than they do playing sports. Many people are worried that this is bad for children's health. This article looks at children's attitudes towards technology and sport.

## One in four children class playing video games as “exercise”, survey finds

**23 per cent of young people surveyed viewed playing video games as a form of exercise raising fears that young people are becoming “hostages to handheld devices”.**

One in four British children believe that playing video games is a form of exercise according to a new report which warns that sport in schools is at a “critical crossroads”.

- 10 Youth Sport Trust, a national charity which promotes physical education and sport, warned that young people risk becoming “hostages to handheld devices” after surveying 1,000 children aged between five and 16.

- 20 The survey found that while three quarters of children say they enjoy PE lessons and 40 per cent want to play more sport, 23 per cent of children thought that “playing a type of computer game with friends is a type of exercise.”

- 25 The survey forms part of a study called “The Class of 2035”, which warns that PE lessons in schools are crucial in order “to avoid a physically and socially disengaged future generation, over dependent on technology.”

It is suggested that schools should look for ways to incorporate technology into sports lessons and explains that although

- 30 “technology plays heavily in the lives of young people” this fondness for gadgets should not be taken “as a sign of young people’s closed-mindedness to other forms of social activity.”

- 35 The report concludes: “There is no resisting the march of technology. Policymakers can feel nostalgic for a time before the challenges new connected technologies have brought in engaging young people, or they can harness these technologies to their advantage.”

- 45 “In order to get children active from a young age, a more holistic approach\* to PE is needed, one which integrates technology and the delivery of a seamless, intuitive and digitally enhanced form of physical activity.”

- Ali Oliver, Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust who has worked in education and sports development for 20 years, said: “I think that we’re starting to see changes in the way that primary schools are looking at and thinking about PE and sport, to see it much more as part of the holistic education of the child rather than a kind of bolt on, extra-curricular programme which I think, if the investment continues, probably in the next two to four years, we will see an increase in participation in primary schools as a result.”

### Glossary

a more holistic approach — a more rounded approach

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