



Comparing Parent Report to Their Adolescent Children's Reports About Technology Use in Home and School Settings

Megan Ledoux M.A.¹, Tara Regan M.S.W.², Susan Hedges Ph.D.²

¹ San Diego State University, CA

² The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Purpose

Adolescents on the autism spectrum spend more time using technology than their peers (Mazurek et al., 2012, 2013). In a recent study of high school students with autism regarding their use of technology, Hedges et al. (in press), found that teens report widespread use of technology to enhance their learning, increase their social interactions, and to help reduce stress. This current study seeks to confirm those findings by asking similar questions to parents of the adolescent study participants.

Research Question:

- What are parent and adolescent perceptions of the benefits and challenges of technology use?

Methods

Paper surveys were completed by 321 parent of high school students with autism receiving special education services across 3 states in the United States (California, North Carolina, and Wisconsin).

The questionnaires covered topics related to their children's technology use at home and at school. Technology was described as computers, cell phones, tablets, etc.

Parent/Caregiver Characteristics

Race	White (67%)
Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic (79%)
Education	College degree (25%) Associate's degree/Some college (23%)
Income	≥80K (37%)

Results

Parents/Caregivers reported their perceptions of benefits and challenges regarding their adolescent's technology use.

Benefits

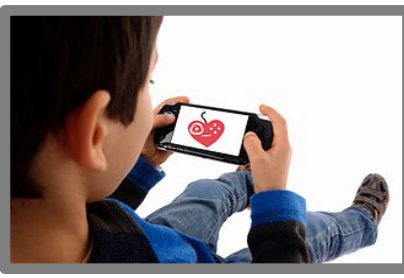
- ❖ Strength (92%)
- ❖ Reduction of anxiety (86%)
- ❖ Socialization (57%)
- ❖ Increased independence at school (80%) and home (76%)

96% of adolescents indicated that they are "good at using technology".

Challenges

- ❖ Becomes a distraction (71%)
- ❖ Excessive use (84%)

57% of adolescents reported feeling distracted by technology.



Conclusion

- Parent reports of the benefits and challenges of technology are similar to what their children reported.
- Within interventions consider the benefits of providing access to technology tools for their students with autism to help increase independence, communication, and social interactions as well as reduce anxiety.
- There is a need to identify ways to mitigate the distracting aspects of technology for adolescents with ASD.

References

- Hedges, S. , Odom, S., Hume, K., & Sam, A. (in press). Technology use as a support tool for secondary students with autism. *Autism*.
- Mazurek, M. & Engelhardt, C. (2013). Video game use and problem behaviors in boys with autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7, 316-324. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2012.09.008
- Mazurek, M.O., Shattuck, P. T., Wagner, M., & Cooper, B. P. (2012). Prevalence and correlates of screen-based media use among youths with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42, 1757-1767. doi: 10.1007/s10803-011-1413-8

Contact Information:
teregan@live.unc.edu

Parent Report | How Teen Reduces Anxiety

83%	59%	7%
Listen to Music	Phone to Call or Text	Meditation app

94% of adolescents reported they use technology to communicate and socialize.

Parent & Teen Report | Communication & Social Use

	Parent (%)	Adolescent (%)
Text	64	69
Phone	57	79
Social Media	42	60
Email	42	64
Video Calls	29	42