

APA: iPad use in classroom ups communication in ASD

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(HealthDay)—Use of handheld touch devices in classrooms may be beneficial for enhancing communication skills among children with autism spectrum disorders, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, held from July 31 to Aug. 4 in Honolulu.

Rhonda McEwen, Ph.D., from the University of Toronto, examined the role that lower-cost, handheld touch technologies (Apple iPod Touch and iPad mobile) play in classroom instruction for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. From January to June 2010, touch devices were introduced to six elementary classrooms, and the consequences were assessed on the communication and sociality of children with communicative disorders, primarily nonverbal children with autism.

The researchers found that all participants experienced mild to significant gains in communication. Statistically significant

improvements in communication skills were noted in nine of the 12 students for whom detailed data were collected. Students with autism spectrum disorders also exhibited heightened levels of motivation, increased [attention spans](#), and increased social interaction with the use of handheld devices.

"Future research should explore the connection of touch-sensory inputs on the communication development of children with [autism spectrum disorders](#)," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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