Dear Editor,

It is by now well known that infants and children respond and wire their brains in ways that are adaptive to the environment in which they sit. Even as young infants, they are attracted to electronic screen media (ESM) by the glowing, colorful, ever changing, moving lights these devices project. Likewise they are attracted to the music, voices and other sounds coming from the devices’ speakers. These sensory experiences are quite distinct from those of the real world. While watching ESM, the child’s brain has entered a sensory world where the visual and auditory experiences are disconnected from touch, motion, movement, time and position.

There is no social activity possible while an infant or a young child is attending to ESM. There is no eye contact, turn taking, true voices, or opportunities for joint attention. Since ESM can only project images and sounds, the time spent attending to ESM is time away from people and other biological activity. The images seen on ESM can never react or interact with a growing child the way living beings do. These Images can not react to the child’s social bids such as baby smiles, laughs, or babbling.

While we may not yet know the implications of these experiences in terms of overt behavior, it seems likely that ESM modifies something in the exposed child’s brain for good or bad. Certainly there is cause of concern that these experiences are a contributing cause to ASD in the very young and to ADHD and other mental health problems in older children (Rowan, 2010) (Heffler MD & Oestreicher MD, 2015) (Dunckley MD, 2015) (Oestreicher MD, 2012)

Susan Greenfield does all of us favor by calling for attention to the possible dangers of ESM, internet, and computer games. Do we really know enough to say the benefits come close to outweighing the dangers? It seems to me the early 21st century world, a world in awe of technology, is conducting a huge uncontrolled experiment with hundreds of millions of children as the subjects, with great dreams but little knowledge.

Already in the minds of many serious sober students of this issue including Susan Greenfield, the dreams are transforming into a nightmare.


