

# **The Relationship between Tablet Technology and Prosocial Behavior in Very Young Children**

by

Abigail Lane

The increasing mobility of modern technology has provided consumers of all ages with opportunities to interact with media, and research has not adequately addressed developmental effects on very young children. The primary goal of this study was to assess how tablet technology, such as the iPad, influenced prosocial behaviors in children aged one to five years. Parents with children enrolled in a childcare program were surveyed about their child's exposure to and use of tablet technology. Further, children's teachers were surveyed about children's use of technology in the classroom and their helping, sharing, and turn-taking behaviors. It was hypothesized that children who use more tablet technology would have less developed prosocial skills, whereas those who have not used tablet technology would have better developed prosocial skills. The results of this study suggest that as parents reported more technology use among their child, teachers reported fewer prosocial behaviors. It is interesting to note that as parent perceptions of temperamental difficulty increased, age of first tablet technology use decreased. Parents of children with difficult temperaments may be more likely to give children tablets at earlier ages to calm or re-direct behavior. The American Academy of Pediatrics should consider broadening their guidelines for structuring childhood media play to include recommendations for temperament in addition to age.