

## "The Downside of Trading Sports for Screens"

As children grow and develop, it is important that they engage in activities that stimulate various regions of the brain, including the release of neurotransmitters such as oxytocin and endorphins. While physical activity, such as sports, has long been recognized as a way to achieve this stimulation, children today are spending more time than ever sitting in front of screens, playing video games instead of engaging in physical activity. This shift can have significant consequences for a child's brain development, as well as their overall well-being.

Oxytocin is a hormone and neurotransmitter that plays a key role in social bonding, trust, and attachment. It is released during physical touch, such as hugging, but also during physical activity, such as SKILLZ. When children engage in sports or other physical activities, they often experience physical touch, such as high-fives, pats on the back, or hugs from coaches or teammates. This physical touch triggers the release of oxytocin, which helps to strengthen social bonds and create feelings of trust and connection.

Endorphins, on the other hand, are neurotransmitters that are released during exercise or physical activity. They are often referred to as the body's natural painkillers, as they can help to reduce pain and improve mood. Endorphins are also associated with feelings of pleasure and euphoria, and can help to reduce stress and anxiety.

When children engage in physical activity, they not only stimulate the release of these important neurotransmitters, but also develop important social and emotional skills. They learn how to work as part of a team, develop resilience and perseverance, and learn to cope with failure and disappointment. These skills are essential for success in all areas of life, including academics, careers, and relationships. SKILLZ instructors are highly trained in brain development activities designed to help in these areas.

Unfortunately, when children spend too much time in front of screens, they miss out on these important benefits. Video games and other screen-based activities do not stimulate the release of oxytocin or endorphins, nor do they provide opportunities for physical touch, social bonding, or skill development.

Moreover, excessive screen time has been linked to a host of negative outcomes, including obesity, poor academic performance, and increased risk of depression and anxiety. By prioritizing screen time over physical activity, children may be putting themselves at risk for a range of negative outcomes, both in the short and long term.

To help children develop healthy brains and bodies, it is important for parents to encourage physical activity, and limit screen time. This can be done by keeping your child engaged in brain boosting activities such as SKILLZ. By doing so, parents can help their children develop the social and emotional skills they need to succeed, as well as the physical health and well-being that comes with regular exercise.