

Perilaku Komunikasi dan Patologi Screen Time Anak di TK Islam Alam Nusantara

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to dissect the pathological impact of excessive screen time on the decline of children's learning achievements at TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung, as well as to analyze the sociological root causes within the domestic sphere. Utilizing a descriptive case study design based on Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Joyce Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement, primary data were collected through triangulation techniques consisting of in-depth interviews with the Headmaster and Homeroom Teachers, structured observations of children's classroom behavior, and documentation studies of developmental anecdotal records. The findings reveal a behavioral deconstruction in children, manifested as a shortened attention span due to the instant dopamine cycles triggered by gadgets, linguistic anomalies (digital echolalia) stemming from linear one-way communication patterns, emotional dysregulation (extreme tantrums) as a form of media withdrawal effect, and chronic physical fatigue resulting from melatonin suppression caused by frequent late-night gadget usage. This communication pathology is rooted in domestic parenting dysfunction, where working parents commodify gadgets as "electronic babysitters" for post-work stress relief (parental uses and gratifications), coupled with a trust issue among urban parents regarding neighborhood safety that triggers media literacy bias (the front stage vs. back stage of parenting). In conclusion, this study successfully formulates a draft for a Collaborative Screen Time Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) based on the synergy between the Curriculum Team and the School Psychologist. This draft is accompanied by a Quarterly Developmental Evaluation Questionnaire (3-Month Cycle) instrument designed to realign mesosystem relationships and sustainably restore the psychophysical functions and the natural growth disposition (fitrah) of children.

Keywords

Screen Time; Learning Achievements; Collaborative SOP; Mesosystem; Nature School;

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, the utilization of digital technology has permeated all facets of human life, including the early childhood ecosystem. Gadgets no longer merely serve as secondary communication tools for adults; instead, they have transformed into a novel digital environment deeply embedded within children's daily routines. The phenomenon of screen exposure—commonly



referred to as screen time—among early childhood has now escalated to an alarming level globally. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) explicitly issued guidelines stating that children under the age of five should be subject to strict limitations regarding sedentary screen time, stipulating it should not exceed one hour per day, wherein less duration is considerably better for their holistic growth and developmental milestones.

However, empirical reality on the ground indicates a wide gap between these ideal medical guidelines and the actual behavior of children within the domestic sphere. Uncontrolled screen exposure exceeding reasonable thresholds triggers one-sided visual overstimulation that adversely impacts the functional structure of the child's developing brain. According to Twenge and Campbell (2018), high screen time intensity strongly correlates with a decline in children's psychological well-being, which deteriorates the prefrontal cortex—the region of the brain responsible for executive functions such as attention allocation, working memory, decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation. When this region is continuously bombarded by rapid, instant digital stimuli, children lose their natural capacity to focus on real-world activities that require a gradual information absorption process (Christakis, 2009). Furthermore, media exposure at a young age frequently alters children's psychological communication and behavioral patterns, shifting them from active physical explorers into passive consumers of digital content (Ruqqayah et al., 2025).

This condition has triggered profound academic and practical concerns within early childhood education institutions, including TK Islam Alam Nusantara. As an educational institution adopting the Nature School (*Sekolah Alam*) concept, the curriculum at this school is specifically designed to optimize child development through exploratory, contextual, and physical activity-based approaches in open nature (Pratiwi & Hartono, 2022). Its core characteristic emphasizes complex sensory-motor stimulation through direct interaction with the environment and peers to build independence, cognitive-linguistic abilities, and emotional maturity. Nevertheless, the efficacy of this curriculum, which is rich in natural stimulation, faces a severe clash when confronting the psychophysical conditions of children that have been distorted by digital media consumption patterns at home.

Based on preliminary observations and deep concerns conveyed by the Headmaster and Homeroom Teachers at TK Islam Alam Nusantara, there are indications of significant degradation in students' learning achievements and behavioral alignment caused by excessive screen exposure. First, regarding the cognitive aspect, children exhibit a drastic decline in classroom focus; their attention spans are extremely short (lasting only 3–5 minutes), they easily succumb to boredom, and they are incapable of completing simple tasks that otherwise align with their age-appropriate milestone standards. Second, in terms of the linguistic aspect, an anomaly has emerged where children frequently mimic non-contextual vocabulary or "strange/foreign jargon." This phenomenon

represents a form of digital echolalia—a one-sided imitation of broadcasts devoid of semantic understanding—which is further exacerbated by the lack of two-way communication spaces both at home and in digital environments (Zimmerman & Christakis, 2007).

Third, in the socio-emotional aspect, teachers observed an increased intensity of excessive tantrums, aggressiveness, and low frustration tolerance when children's desires are not instantly gratified or when gadgets are removed from them (Sari & Sugito, 2023). Fourth, this disruption extends to the physiological aspect, wherein their sleep schedules become erratic due to frequently staying up late to stare at screens (Sigman, 2012). Consequently, children arrive at school in a state of chronic fatigue, drowsiness, and lack of vital energy, which ultimately stifles their intrinsic motivation to engage actively in nature exploration activities—the very soul of TK Islam Alam Nusantara.

Dissecting this issue further through the lens of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), these impediments to learning achievements occur due to a severe dysfunction at the mesosystem level. Specifically, there is an absence of alignment between the school microsystem (a classroom environment demanding active physical interaction and natural exploration) and the home microsystem (a domestic environment that permits children to remain passive in front of screens). Through in-depth interviews with the school management, it was revealed that the root causes within the domestic sphere are driven by two main parental factors. The first factor is the demanding work schedule of parents, which leads to the intentional commodification of gadgets as "electronic babysitters"—a practical calming instrument to keep children quiet so as not to disrupt parental productivity (Hadi & Lestari, 2021). This phenomenon aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973), where parents utilize digital media primarily to satisfy their own need for post-work relief and quietness rather than serving the developmental needs of the child.

The second, equally crucial factor is a trust issue among urban parents regarding letting their children engage in physical activities outside the house. Overwhelming anxiety over the risks of injury, getting dirty, or neighborhood safety factors leads parents to take a pseudo-shortcut by confining children indoors with gadgets. Applying Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy framework (1959), parents construct a protective "front stage" of modern parenting, while on the "back stage," they struggle with digital literacy bias and an inability to manage their children's motor energy. Recent empirical evidence shows that digital literacy among parents plays a pivotal role in dictating how digital devices are integrated into family life and how children's rights and privacy are managed (Harnum & Pinariya, 2023). When parents lack Islamic communication ethics and proper media guidance, the digital environment negatively shapes the child's moral conduct (akhlak) and communicative habitus (Azwar & Rubino, 2026).

To reinforce the analytical framework, this study synthesizes two primary theoretical foundations alongside technical concepts of child developmental psychology:

1. **Ecological Systems Theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner):** Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that child development is influenced by complex, reciprocal interactions within nested layers of their environment. The focus of this research lies on the structural breakdown between the Microsystem (active nature school vs. passive home screen time) and the Mesosystem (the existence of a mesosystemic gap where school regulations conflict with digital parenting at home). The formulation of a collaborative policy intervention aims directly at bridging this mesosystemic divide.
2. **School-Family Partnership Theory (Joyce Epstein):** Through the Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, Epstein (2018) reinforces the shared responsibility between educational institutions and families via six types of involvement. This research contextualizes the Parenting type (educating parents on screen time pathologies) and the Communicating type (establishing two-way dialogic communication through periodic developmental monitoring instruments).
3. **Screen Time Concepts and Developmental Boundaries:** Screen time is defined as the total duration of interaction with digital visual displays, which is predominantly sedentary (Sigman, 2012). Official limits established by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Maximum Screen Time Durations for Children Based on WHO Guidelines (2019)

Age Group	Recommended Maximum Screen Time Duration	Remarks / Clinical Impacts
0 - 1 Year	0 Hours (Not allowed at all)	Disrupts early visual and motor neural pathways
2 - 4 Years	Maximum 1 Hour / Day	Less duration is considerably better; requires high-quality co-viewing

Deviations from these established parameters constitute excessive screen time, which triggers behavioral distortions in the classroom because it disrupts the functional formation of the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) as the master controller of executive functions (Christakis, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Contradictions between generations and changing family communication patterns in the digital era further exacerbate these gaps when proper dialogic mechanisms are neglected (Madum & Muhaini, 2026).

Therefore, this research aims to dissect the communication pathologies and behavioral

manifestations resulting from excessive screen time among children at TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung, unpack the sociological domestic root causes of digital parenting dysfunction, and formulate a novel policy intervention in the form of a Collaborative Screen Time Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) supported by a Quarterly Developmental Evaluation Questionnaire (3-Month Cycle).

2. METHODS

The research methodology is comprehensively outlined to explain the approach, subjects, and procedures for data collection and analysis in the field.

2.1 Approach, Method, and Research Type

This study utilizes a qualitative approach as it aims to understand, describe, and dissect the phenomenon of children's screen time pathology and educators' concerns in a deep, contextual, and naturalistic setting without relying on statistical measurements. The research method employed is a Case Study to explore a bounded system at TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung in depth, specifically regarding the friction between the nature school curriculum and the passive digital culture embedded in domestic urban households. The research type is Qualitative Descriptive, providing a detailed narrative, systematic structure, and accurate representation of facts, characteristics, and interrelationships between variables at the research locus (Miles et al., 2014).

2.2 Research Locus, Subject, Object, and Informants

The study was conducted at TK Islam Alam Nusantara, located in Bandung, West Java. The subjects of this research are the educators and administrators who possess institutional authority, observe daily child behavior, and directly handle the impacts of the investigated phenomenon. The object of this research is *Children's Communication Behavior in Urban Digital Parenting: A Case Study on Early Childhood Screen Time Pathology at TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung*. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on explicit criteria regarding their observational capacity and institutional authority:

1. The **Headmaster** of TK Islam Alam Nusantara, as the primary custodian of institutional policy, curriculum alignment, and macro-school governance.
2. **Homeroom Teachers (Classroom Teachers)**, as primary observers who interact directly with students daily, document anecdotal developmental records, and manage classroom dynamics.

3. The **School Psychologist** and **Curriculum Lead**, who served as expert consults during policy synthesis and instrument validation.

2.3 Data Sources

Primary data were gathered directly from original sources at the research site through verbatim transcripts of semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Headmaster and Homeroom Teachers, alongside detailed field notes from direct classroom observations. Secondary data, acting as corroborative evidence, were collected from institutional documentation, including school vision-mission statements, nature curriculum frameworks, student developmental anecdotal logs, report cards, and contemporary literature in digital parenting and child developmental psychology.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection employed rigorous triangulation of sources and techniques, comprising:

1. **Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews:** Conducted with the Headmaster and Homeroom Teachers using a pre-validated interview guide focusing on classroom focus, linguistic anomalies, emotional outbursts, sleep schedules, and parental interactions.
2. **Structured-Passive Participant Observation:** The research team was physically present during classroom activities and outdoor nature exploration sessions to observe and record behavioral manifestations, attention durations, motor involvement, and peer interactions among children exhibiting screen time dependency.
3. **Documentation Studies:** Systematic review of anecdotal records, behavioral notes, student progress reports, and administrative minutes from curriculum evaluation meetings.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the interactive and continuous analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which encompasses four distinct phases:

1. **Data Collection:** Gathering all raw interview transcripts, observational field notes, and documentation records into a centralized qualitative database.
2. **Data Condensation:** Sorting, filtering, categorizing, and coding raw data into major thematic categories, such as "Cognitive Degradation," "Digital Echolalia," "Emotional Dysregulation," "Parental Workload Commodification," and "SOP Formulation."

3. **Data Display:** Structuring organized data into comparative tables, analytical matrices, and narrative flowcharts to depict clear causal relationships between domestic screen time and classroom behavior.
4. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** Interpreting thematic patterns, verifying findings against theoretical frameworks (Bronfenbrenner, Epstein, Bandura), and translating insights into a collaborative policy draft.

2.6 Data Trustworthiness (Credibility)

To ensure scientific credibility and rigor, the research employed:

1. **Source Triangulation:** Cross-checking interview data obtained from the Headmaster against empirical observations reported by Homeroom Teachers.
2. **Method Triangulation:** Comparing self-reported parental behaviors from interview transcripts with direct observations of child conduct during outdoor natural activities.
3. **Peer Debriefing:** Holding formal review sessions with the Curriculum Lead and the School Psychologist to test the conceptual consistency of the proposed Collaborative SOP and evaluation instruments.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.1. Geographical and Philosophical Description of the Research Site

TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung is an early childhood educational institution that fuses Islamic ethical values with a nature-based experiential curriculum (*nature-based Islamic education*). Philosophically, the school views the natural universe as *ayat-ayat kauniyah* (the observable signs of Allah's creation) that must be explored kinesthetically, sensorily, and spiritually by children to nurture their inherent *fitrah* (natural disposition) as both servants of Allah (*'abdullah*) and stewards of the earth (*khalifah fil ard*). Outdoor learning, collaborative social play, and intensive gross motor stimulation form the core operational pillars of the daily learning ecosystem. However, empirical findings indicate that the infiltration of unmonitored digital media into the domestic sphere creates a profound cultural and physical misalignment with this nature-based pedagogy.

1.2. Analysis of the Excessive Screen Time Phenomenon (Micro Analysis)

In-depth interviews and observational logging revealed four distinct pathological manifestations across cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and physical developmental domains. Table 2 summarizes these empirical findings:

Table 2. Pathologies of Children's Communication and Behavior in School

Developmental Aspect	Passive Domestic Mediation (Screen Time)	Communication & Behavioral Pathology at School
Cognitive Aspect	Exposure to rapid video edits & instant reward loops	Shortened Attention Span (3–5 minute focus limit, "dopamine loop" trap)
Linguistic Aspect	One-way linear digital consumption	Digital Echolalia (Non-contextual repetition of jargon, pragmatic deficit)
Emotional Aspect	Use of screens as primary emotional pacifiers	Emotional Dysregulation (Extreme tantrums, media withdrawal effect)
Physical Aspect	Late-night screen exposure & blue light emission	Chronic Fatigue (Melatonin suppression, lack of physical vital energy)

1. Cognitive Degradation: Shortened Attention Span and Learning Impediments

Homeroom teachers consistently reported a severe decline in classroom concentration among children exposed to excessive daily screen time. These children displayed an extremely abbreviated attention span, often losing interest in guided activities within 3 to 5 minutes. They exhibited constant restlessness, frequently abandoning assigned hands-on projects before completion.

Theoretically, exposure to short-form, fast-paced digital media (such as YouTube Shorts or TikTok) induces an artificial "dopamine loop" in the developing brain (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). The brain becomes conditioned to rapid visual updates and effortless rewards. When placed in a Nature School environment—which inherently requires slow, sequential, and patient observation (such as planting seeds, observing insect behavior, or building wooden structures)—the child's brain experiences severe sensory boredom. The real world fails to match the hyper-stimulating speed of digital screens, causing the child to actively reject physical learning tasks.

2. Linguistic Anomaly: The Phenomenon of Digital Echolalia

Observations in the play yard revealed children frequently vocalizing adult jargon or media catchphrases (such as "fomo," "cupu," or gaming phrases) without understanding their semantic meaning or situational context. This phenomenon represents *digital echolalia*—the mechanical, non-contextual repetition of auditory inputs received from digital broadcasts.

According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), children acquire language and behavior through observational imitation. However, digital devices provide a strictly *Linear Model of Communication*—a one-way flow of information

completely devoid of interactive feedback (Zimmerman & Christakis, 2007). The child functions as a passive receiver. Without active, two-way interpersonal dialogue, the child's pragmatic language skills deteriorate. They struggle to formulate polite verbal expressions or practice Islamic interpersonal communication norms, such as *qaulan layyina* (gentle, respectful speech) when interacting with teachers and peers (Azwar & Rubino, 2026).

3. Emotional Dysregulation: Excessive Tantrums as a Media Withdrawal Response

Teachers documented heightened frequencies of severe emotional outbursts—including screaming, hitting, throwing objects, and intense weeping—whenever gadgets were withheld or when children were required to transition from free play to structured group activities.

This behavior indicates a breakdown in internal emotional self-regulation. In domestic settings, parents frequently use screens as an external pacifier to soothe distress. Consequently, the child fails to develop intrinsic coping mechanisms (Mulyani, 2020; Sari & Sugito, 2023). When the digital device is removed, the child undergoes a psychological withdrawal response. Because their verbal communication skills are constrained by linear media consumption, their frustration is expressed through aggressive, non-verbal instrumental channels.

4. Physiological Disruptions: Disrupted Sleep Patterns and Chronic Fatigue

Physical observations revealed that screen-dependent children frequently arrived at school exhibiting physical signs of exhaustion, lethargy, dark ocular circles, and heavy yawning. They demonstrated minimal interest in physical outdoor play and sought opportunities to lie down or sit passively.

Clinically, exposure to blue light emitted by electronic screens during evening hours suppresses the pineal gland's secretion of melatonin, a hormone essential for regulating sleep-wake cycles (Sigman, 2012). From an Islamic behavioral perspective, this disruption prevents children from practicing early sleep habits aligned with the Prophet's *sunnah*, which are vital for preserving physical vitality for morning learning (*thalabul 'ilmi*). Deprived of adequate restorative sleep, children lack the stamina needed for sensory-motor exploration (*tadabbur alam*).

To illustrate this cultural misalignment, the following matrix presents the fundamental contradictions between home and school environments:

Table 3. Fundamental Contradictions of the Child's Environment

School Culture (Active Nature)	Home Culture (Passive Digital)
Kinesthetic outdoor exploration & physical movement	Sedentary sitting in front of electronic displays
Active, two-way interpersonal social dialogue	Passive, one-way linear media consumption
Gradual, process-oriented sensory stimulation	Instant dopamine spikes via hyper-edited media

The Environmental Clash: Children subjected to unmonitored home screen time experience psychophysical distortion, disabling their ability to absorb the active, experiential benefits of the Nature School curriculum.

1. Macro Analysis: Sociological Construction of Domestic Parenting

Sociological data obtained from parent-teacher consultations and qualitative interviews identified two primary structural drivers within urban households:

a. Commodification of Gadgets as "Electronic Babysitters"

Urban working parents facing intense occupational stress and prolonged work hours frequently experience acute parenting burnout. Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973), media selection in the household shifts toward fulfilling the parents' immediate gratification—specifically, obtaining personal quietude and uninterrupted work time. Gadgets are systematically commodified as "electronic babysitters" to keep children stationary (Hadi & Lestari, 2021). This practice represents a departure from Islamic parenting principles (*Amanah Parenting Islami*), substituting authentic emotional presence and dialogic interaction with mechanical digital pacification.

b. Parental Trust Issues and Safety Anxiety

Urban parents expressed pervasive anxiety regarding neighborhood safety, traffic hazards, hygiene, and physical injury risks associated with outdoor play. Consequently, they restrict their children's physical movement, treating indoor gadget use as a controlled, safe alternative.

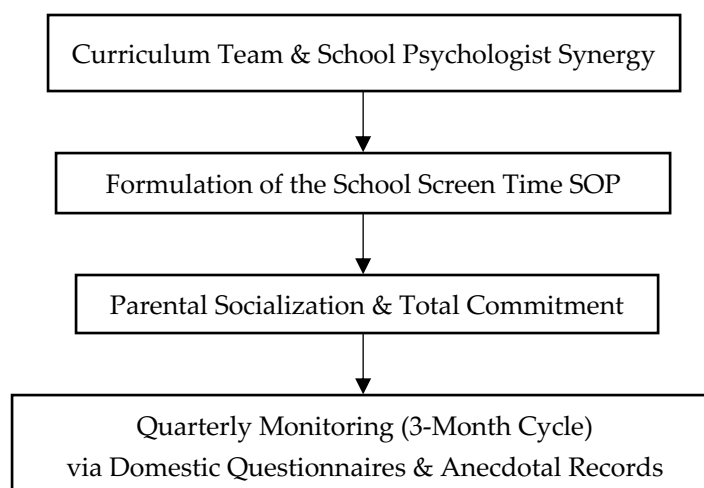
Using Goffman's Dramaturgy framework (1959), parents construct a protective "front stage" that emphasizes safety and modern digital inclusion.

However, on the "back stage," this restriction reflects a media literacy deficit and an avoidance of the effort required to supervise active motor play (Harnum & Pinariya, 2023). Restricting physical movement during early childhood suppresses the natural release of motor energy, which subsequently manifests as hyperactive behavior and emotional volatility in the school setting.

1.3 Reconstruction of School Policy: Collaborative Screen Time SOP (Novel Concept)

To resolve this mesosystemic divide (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), educational institutions must transition from reactive discipline to proactive, structured home-school partnerships (Epstein, 2018). TK Islam Alam Nusantara formulated a novel operational policy framework, outlined in Table 4:

Table 4. Operational Flow of the Collaborative Screen Time Policy



1. Integrative Synergy: Curriculum and Psychological Review

The policy integrates educational design with clinical child psychology. The Curriculum Team aligns optional, educational screen content with weekly academic themes (e.g., viewing a 20-minute marine life documentary for the "Aquatic Animals" theme). Concurrently, the School Psychologist establishes behavioral weaning protocols, guiding parents on how to gradually reduce gadget dependency, handle withdrawal tantrums, and implement physical sensory activities (e.g., Islamic-themed tactile bins) at home.

2. Socialization as a Family Communication Da'wah Movement

The policy is introduced to parents not as an administrative burden, but as a collaborative *Da'wah* initiative (*Bil-Hikmah*). Parenting workshops present empirical neurological data alongside Quranic principles of family guardianship (e.g., Surah At-Tahrim 66:6). Parents formally sign a "Fitrah Parenting Commitment Pact," pledging to

enforce screen boundaries and eliminate screen time for children under two years while capping it at one hour daily for older children, in accordance with WHO guidelines (2019).

3. Quarterly Evaluation (3-Month Cycle) via Monitoring Questionnaires

To ensure compliance and measure progress, the school implements a *Quarterly Developmental Evaluation Questionnaire (3-Month Cycle)*. Parents track domestic variables daily, including:

- a. Total daily screen duration and content type.
- b. Nighttime sleep schedule and ease of sleeping.
- c. Frequency and severity of emotional tantrums.

Homeroom Teachers cross-validate these domestic logs against daily classroom behavioral records. The selection of a 90-day (3-month) cycle is grounded in neuroplasticity principles, providing sufficient time for neural rewiring, habit formation, and the restoration of natural sensory-motor engagement (Twenge & Campbell, 2018).

1. CONCLUSION

Excessive screen time among early childhood students at TK Islam Alam Nusantara Bandung causes multi-dimensional developmental pathologies that directly impair classroom learning achievements. Cognitively, children suffer from shortened attention spans and rapid sensory boredom caused by instant digital dopamine cycles. Linguistically, linear media consumption triggers digital echolalia and pragmatic communication deficits, undermining the development of respectful interpersonal dialogue (*qaulan layyina*). Emotionally, the commodification of screens as emotional pacifiers leads to severe emotional dysregulation and withdrawal tantrums when devices are removed. Physiologically, nighttime screen exposure suppresses melatonin secretion, causing chronic fatigue that depletes the physical energy required for natural outdoor exploration. Sociologically, these pathologies stem from domestic digital parenting dysfunction, where working parents use gadgets as "electronic babysitters" to relieve personal stress, while safety concerns prompt them to restrict physical outdoor play, revealing a significant media literacy bias within urban households.

To bridge the mesosystemic gap between the passive digital environment at home and the active nature-based curriculum at school, this study formulates a Collaborative Screen Time Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) paired with a Quarterly Developmental Evaluation Questionnaire (3-Month Cycle). By operationalizing Urie Bronfenbrenner's

Ecological Systems Theory and Joyce Epstein's School-Family Partnership Framework, this intervention aligns school policies with domestic parenting practices through joint curriculum-psychologist design, formal parental commitment pacts, and structured quarterly monitoring. Implementing this 90-day evaluation cycle provides the time required for neural recovery and habit restructuring, successfully realigning the mesosystem, restoring children's psychophysical health, and safeguarding their natural developmental disposition (*fitriah*).

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