

**Draft Letter to Your Member of Parliament Regarding Labour's
Touchscreen Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) for
Four-Year-Olds**

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
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[Date]

The Rt Hon [MP's Full Name]
House of Commons
London
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**Subject: Draft Letter to Your Member of Parliament Regarding
Labour's Touchscreen Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) for
Four-Year-Olds**

Dear [MP's Title and Surname],

I am writing to you as one of your constituents **[YOUR POSTCODE]** to express my deep concern about the Labour government's new guidance, announced on 14 June 2025, requiring schools to assess reception-age pupils (as young as four) using touchscreen devices as part of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). As a constituent and **[parent/concerned citizen]**, I believe this policy is misguided and risks significant harm to child development, parental rights, and societal well-being. I urge you to raise this issue in Parliament and advocate for the policy's reversal.

Extensive research highlights the detrimental effects of early screen exposure on young children. A 2023 study in Paediatrics found that for every additional hour of daily screen time, children under five showed a 10% increase in attention-related issues by age six. Similarly, a 2021 American Academy of Pediatrics report linked excessive screen use in preschoolers to a 25% increase in developmental setbacks, including delays in language and social skills. Four-year-olds need hands-on, sensory-rich experiences, through play, books, and human interaction. This is proven to foster cognitive and emotional growth.

The RBA's reliance on touchscreens risks normalising screen dependency at a critical developmental stage, potentially impairing attention spans, fine motor skills, and social abilities.

The policy also disregards parental choice. A 2024 Mumsnet survey revealed that 68% of UK parents are concerned about excessive screen time for their children, with many deliberately limiting device use to support healthier development. A 2022 University of Cambridge study found that children with restricted screen time before age five showed a 15% improvement in emotional regulation and social interactions by age seven. By mandating touchscreen assessments, the Department for Education (DfE) overrides these parental preferences, undermining the rights of families to raise children in screen-free or screen-limited environments, as highlighted by campaigners like Safe Screens (safescreens.org).

The broader implications of this policy are alarming. Normalising screen use in early education could exacerbate mental health challenges, with a 2023 NHS study reporting a 7% rise in probable mental health issues among children aged 8–16 since 2017, partly linked to digital overuse. This contributes to high school absence rates (20% of children miss at least one day every two weeks), which correlate with poorer academic outcomes and reduced earnings of £10,000 annually by age 28, according to government research. Additionally, the policy risks widening educational inequalities, as 30% of children from disadvantaged backgrounds lack regular access to digital devices, per a 2023 Sutton Trust report, potentially putting them at a disadvantage for touchscreen assessments.

At a time when schools face budget constraints, with the Institute for Fiscal Studies warning in 2025 that rising costs (e.g., a proposed 2.8% teacher pay rise) will outstrip funding, investing in touchscreen infrastructure for the RBA is a poor use of resources. Funds would be better allocated to proven interventions like play-based learning, and parental engagement, that have proven benefits for early development, or pastoral support to address mental health and attendance issues.

I urge you to challenge the DfE's guidance and advocate for its immediate revocation. The RBA should prioritise play-based assessments that align with child development research and respect parental choice. As Safe Screens has argued (safescreens.org/letter-to-mp-rba), this policy risks "digitising childhood" at the expense of young children's well-being. Please raise this issue with the Education Secretary and push for a review to ensure our education system prioritises evidence-based practices over unproven digital interventions.

I would appreciate a response outlining your position and any actions you plan to take. Thank you for representing our community's concerns in Parliament.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

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