

Things You Should Know About Screen Time

Dear Parent –

Here are some common beliefs about digital devices as they relate to our children:

- They represent the future.
- Because they represent the future, young children should become proficient with them as early as possible.
- Technology has so much more to teach children than the “old-fashioned” stuff. The more time children spend with computers, the more they learn.

But here’s the reality:

- There are many skills, including social-emotional skills (teamwork, communication, etc.), that your child will need in the future and that are being *hindered* by digital devices.
- Bill Gates and Steve Jobs had no access to technology when they were children, and as we all know they did quite well with it in their later years.
- Child and brain development tell us that children learn through all of their senses, through movement, and through social interaction. All of that is limited when children spend time with screens. The more time children spend with computers, the less time they have for the experiences they need to thrive.

But here’s the really scary part: As the research begins to catch up with life in the digital world, we’re learning how dangerous screen time can be. Here’s some of what we know:

- Language delays, lack of fine motor control, depression, and aggression are some of the problems being reported.
- Children are becoming addicted to devices and belligerent when separated from them.
- Myopia (nearsightedness), dry eye disease, and ocular lock are some of the vision problems becoming all too common.
- Children are disconnecting from parents, teachers, and each other.

Here’s my advice. Reassure yourself with the knowledge that

- with the rapid rate at which technology changes, almost every electronic thing your child could experience today will be obsolete by tomorrow.
- even Steve Jobs limited technology usage for his children at home, and Silicon Valley tech executives send their kids to tech-free schools!
- the old-fashioned stuff – play, drawing, manipulation of three-dimensional materials, and *talking with you* – are what nature intended and offer your child *far more* than digital device ever could.

Playfully yours,
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Rae Pica, Early Childhood Author & Consultant

www.raepica.com