



Growing readers!

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Children and Digital Media: Rethinking Parent Roles

Smartphones and tablets are on nearly every dinner table and nightstand, and even our youngest children interact with technology on a daily basis. Because technology is so much a part of our everyday lives, parents have to work pretty hard to keep up with what's out there. But more than knowing the latest must-have app or game, parents may need to reconsider how they connect with their child during technology use.

Some experts suggest that adults – parents, teachers, librarians – need to consider their role as one of a “media mentor,” a trusted adult who engage with children to use technology in creative and interesting ways, beyond games and flashing lights. This sharing can lead to interesting conversations between parent and child, can boost language development, and can lead to a healthy attitude about media and technology.

There are two areas in which technology may provide a good literacy boost: an exposure to new words and ideas, and helping children learn more about topics they're interested in exploring. Here's how:

Exposure to new words: Research suggests that carefully designed programming, for example PBS's SuperWhy! on PBS, can improve children's language development, letter knowledge, and understanding of sounds. Beyond educational television, other media experiences such as watching an author read and talk about a book, interacting with e-books that contain interesting and exciting words, and engaging with quality apps that promote word growth can all help exposure young children to new words and ideas.

Learning more about interesting topics: Does your child love butterflies? Construction equipment? Soccer? Regardless of topic, one can find interesting pictures, video and text about that topic. As your child's first teacher, spend some time familiarizing yourself with some of the reputable sources online and the types of media available. By doing the background work before sitting down with your child, you will be able to use your media time together for exploration and learning.

Regardless of the technology you and your child are using together, **be an active participant**. Make sure your child is following along and understanding what's going on. Keep the conversation flowing with lots of back-and-forth talk. Model healthy technology use by keeping an eye on the time. Most importantly, recognize your changing role in helping your young learner navigate the digital world.

For more information:

- *How True Are Our Assumptions about Screen Time?* By Lisa Guernsey. Retrieved from: <http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/music-math-more/how-true-are-our-assumptions-about-screen-time>
- Educational Literacy Apps <http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/literacyapps/>

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Help Your Child Learn to Use the Internet Properly and Effectively

The Internet/World Wide WEB — a network of computers that connects people and information all around the world — has become an important part of how we learn and of how we interact with others. For children to succeed today, they must be able to use the Internet. Here are some suggestions for helping your child learn to do so properly and effectively.

For information about children and television/video game use, read [Parent Tips: How to Monitor TV Viewing and Video Game Playing \(/article/26555\)](/article/26555).

Children and Internet Use

- **Spend time online with your child.** If you don't have a computer at home, ask your librarian if the library has computers that you and your child may use. Learn along with your child. If you're not familiar with computers or with the Internet, ask the librarian if and when someone is available at the library to help you and your child learn together to use them. If your child knows about computers, let her teach you. Ask her to explain what she is doing and why. Ask her to show you her favorite Web sites and to tell you what she likes about them. This will help her build self-confidence and pride in her abilities.
- **Help your child to locate appropriate Internet Web sites.** At the same time, make sure that she understands what you think are appropriate Web sites for her to visit. Point her in the direction of sites that can help her with homework or that relate to her interests.
- **Pay attention to any games she might download or copy from the Internet.** Some games are violent or contain sexual or other content that is inappropriate for

children. Resources such as [Common Sense Media \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/) (also available [in Spanish \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/latino/\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/latino/)) can help you to make good Web site choices and give you more information about Internet use.

- **You might consider using "filters" to block your child from accessing sites that may be inappropriate.** These filters include software programs that you can install on your computer. In addition, many Internet service providers offer filters (often for free) that restrict the sites that children can visit. Of course, these filters are not always completely effective-and children can find ways around them. The best safeguard is your supervision and involvement.
- **Monitor the amount of time that your child spends online.** Internet surfing can be just as time consuming as watching TV. Don't let it take over your child's life. Have her place a clock near the computer and keep track of how much time she is spending online. Remember, many commercial online services charge for the amount of time the service is used. These charges can mount up quickly!
- **Teach your child rules for using the Internet safely.** Let her know that she should **never** do the following:
 - tell anyone — including her friends — her computer password
 - use bad language or send cruel, threatening or untrue e-mail messages
 - give out any personal information, including her name or the names of family members, home address, phone number, age, or school name
 - arrange to meet a stranger that she has "talked" with in an online "chat room."

References

Helping Your Child Succeed in School. U.S. Department of Education. First published in June 1993. Revised 2002 and 2005.

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Ten benefits of digital language in education

Thanks to the various languages that includes the digital language allows infinite open doors to knowledge, approach the reality of the student and multiply learning opportunities.

