

Rethinking Screen Time for the Digital Age

*Imagining Screens as Windows,
Mirrors and Magnifying Glasses*

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Dean of Distance Learning & Continuing Education

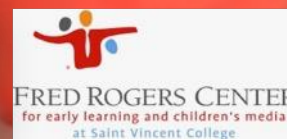
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Editor, *Technology and Digital Media in the Early Years* (2015)

Editor, *Family Engagement in the Digital Age* (2017)



Create, imagine, inspire and discover

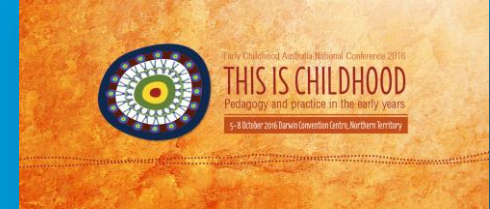
At Erikson Institute

Our vision is that every adult who works with young children or on their behalf will be knowledgeable, aware, skilled, and *alive to the possibilities of each child's life.*

It depends.



My context for tech in the early years



Reflect on the pathways you have been on to get here today.

What contexts have shaped your thoughts/feelings about tech and children?

How can tech help children create, imagine, inspire and discover? *It depends.*

Digital obstacles for analog adults

Clinging to old tools to complete new tasks



We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology.

Carl Sagan, astronomer

We're the old and the analog.
They're the young and the digital.
Were you born digital...analog...or BPC?

Today's ten-year-olds have never lived in a world without a smartphone. Technology isn't a wow anymore. Play – and things that allow them to express themselves – is a wow.

Chris Byrne, The Toy Guy



If you were born before 1985 you know what life is like with and without the Internet.

BPCers are “the only fluent translators of before and after.”

We remember when...



They are the young and the digital

Their future depends on the quality of interactions, relationships, experiences and “wows” that make up their childhood moments through the first 5 years of life.

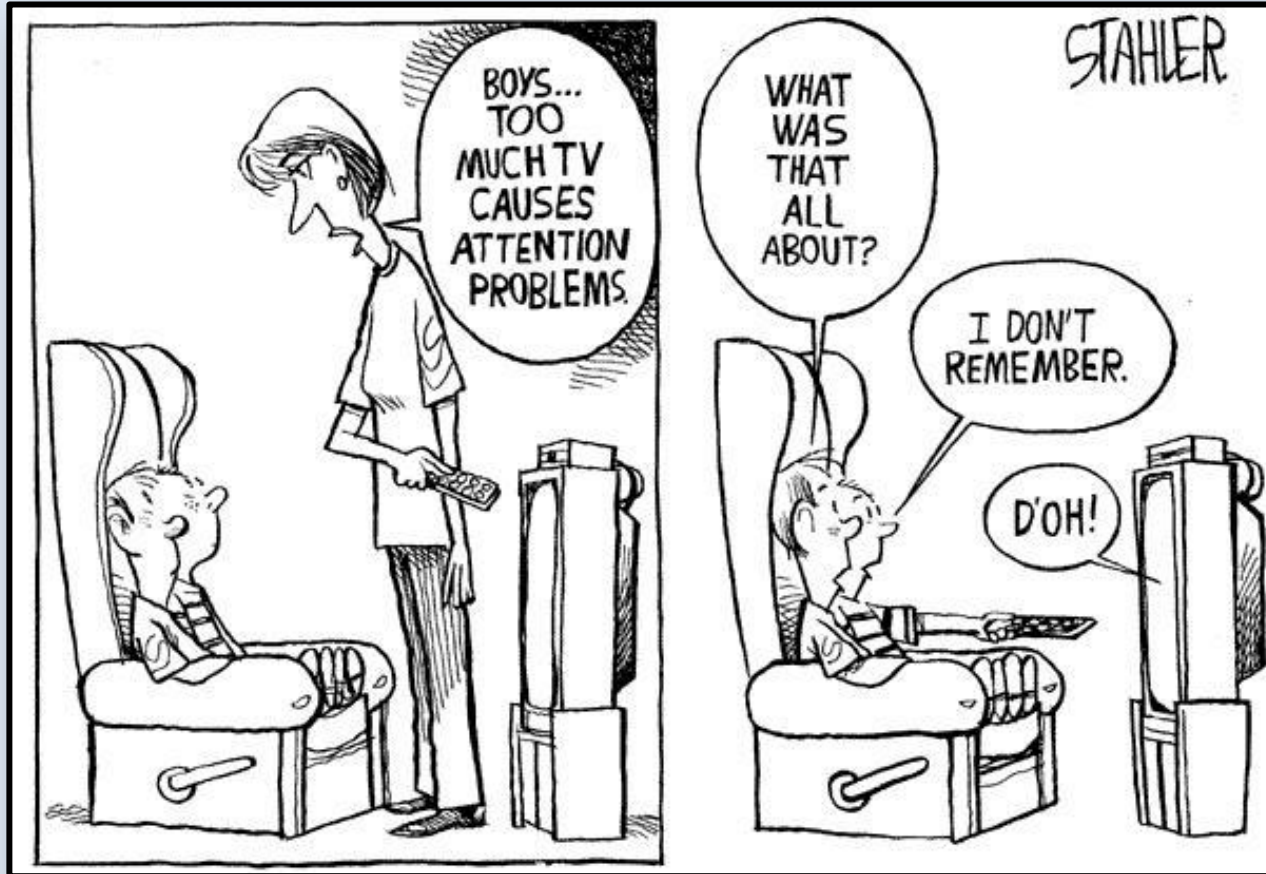
So let's make sure their first:

- 64,000 minutes
- 1,820 days
- 260 weeks
- 60 months

are full of the wows that matter most!



Setting our screen time context



Setting our screen time context



Setting our screen time context



Setting our screen time context



✓ Co-viewing



Quality interactions?
Joint engagement?

Setting our screen time context

Interactions, relationships, joint engagement



A nudge – The more you connect the less you connect

- Young children learn media habits from the adults in their lives.
- How can we nudge ourselves from “adults behaving badly” to becoming mindful media mentors for young children, parents and families?



"Connection is inevitable, distraction is a choice."
Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, The Distraction Addiction

Images credits: [Oglivy \(for the Center For Psychological Research, Shenyang\)](#)

Are we digitally preoccupied, distracted, dependent, disconnected...



A nudge or two...

How did our free time become screen time?

If adults are media mentors and role models in the digital age, how do we rethink screen time as an adult issue first ?



Screen time is bad!

Recent headlines in the U.S.

- *Screen Addiction Is Taking a Toll on Children*, New York Times, 7/6/15
- *Screentime Is Making Kids, Moody, Crazy and Lazy*, Psychology Today, 8/18/15
- *TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION: Concern, Controversy, Finding Balance*, Common Sense Media, 5/3/16
- *Electronic media keeping kids from communicating with parents*, ScienceDaily, 5/27/16
- *Is our screen-time anxiety more detrimental than screen time?* Washington Post, 5/30/16



Screen time is bad!

Recent headlines in Australia

- Parents should limit kids' screen time and send them outside for more 'green time', expert says, Daily Telegraph, 9/4/16
- What too much screen time is really doing to your kids, Ten eyewitness NEWS, 9/5/16
- Australian children spending more time on screens, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 9/19/16
- Most children's daily screen time far above two-hour guideline, Sydney Morning Herald, 9/20/16
- TV dominates screen time for kids: study, news.com, Australian Associated Press, 9/20/16
- Australian children increasingly glued to screens, study finds, ABC News, 9/21/16



Screen time is really bad!

- *It's 'digital heroin': How screens turn kids into psychotic junkies*, Dr. Nicholas Kardaras, New York Post, 8/17/16
...or is it?
- *Why calling screentime 'digital heroin' is digital garbage: Inciting fear about the dangers of digital media is counter productive*, Rachel Becker, The Verge, 8/30/16



Screen time is OK. We think.

- *Parents Don't Need to Worry About 'Screen Time' Anymore*, Forbes, 7/30/15
- *Stop Talking About 'Screen Time,' Start Thinking About Screen Use*, Huffington Post, 8/27/15
- *Parents: Reject Technology Shame*, The Atlantic, 11/4/15
- *'Smartphone won't make your kids dumb. We think*, Quartz, 6/10/16
- *On Kids and Screen, A Middle Way Between Fear and Hype*, nprNOW, 7/13/16
- *Why Device-Free Dinners Are a Healthy Choice*, Common Sense Media, 8/4/16
- *'Screenwise' author Devorah Heitner to parents: Don't monitor kids' screen time*, Raising Austin, 8/24/16



How True Are Our Assumptions about Screen Time?

- Assumption 1: As long as the content is educational,” it’s good for children.
- Assumption 2: The TV may be on in the background, but my children aren’t affected.
- Assumption 3: All media for children under age 2 is damaging.
- Assumption 4: Scary movies and TV shows just go over children’s heads.
- Assumption 5: E-books are distracting to young children.

How True Are Our Assumptions about Screen Time?

Lisa Guernsey, New America, NAEYC for Families

Parents and educators need guidance on when and how to use technology with young children in ways that will help, not harm.



Rethinking screen time

We argue that this long-held focus on the quantity of digital media use is now obsolete, and that parents should instead ask themselves and their children questions about screen context (where, when and how digital media are accessed), content (what is being watched or used), and connections (whether and how relationships are facilitated or impeded).

Families and screen time: Current advice and emerging research

Rethinking screen time

I think that the approach we should take to it is to understand that all of us have changed the way we live because of the way we use these devices, but we also have to be aware that they are just tools. They are neutral. What we do with them, and what we demonstrate for our children, and what we let our children do with them is what determines the outcome.”

Michael Rich, The Mediatrixian



Rethinking screen time: Beyond one-size-fits all

- *Interactive Media Use at Younger Than the Age of 2 Years: Time to Rethink the American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines?* Dr. Dimitri Christakis

All media is educational – so we need to be aware of what children are being educated about.

Media is very much a part of our lives. The real research agenda is to find out how to use it in healthy ways.

- *Beyond ‘turn it off’: How to advise families on media use, AAP News, October 2015*

In a world where “screen time” is becoming simply “time,” our policies must evolve or become obsolete. The public needs to know that the Academy’s advice is science-driven, not based merely on the precautionary principle.

NEW: *Media and Young Minds Policy & Children and Adolescents Policy*

The Medium Is the Message: How Electronic Media Are Transforming Our Patients’ World

A nudge or two

Let's stop asking the wrong question.

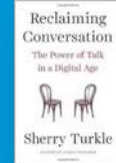
Let's make only new mistakes.



Michael Levine, Executive Director
Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop

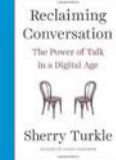
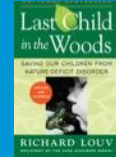
Acknowledge the concerns

- The “how much” screen time dilemma
- Too much passive, non-interactive use
- Always on media / Background TV
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Internet safety, social media and digital footprints
- Commercial messages and in-app sales aimed at children
- Negative impact on social-emotional development



Acknowledge the concerns

- Displaces/replaces essential early childhood experiences
- Reduces outdoor time
- Decreases physical activity
- Increases childhood obesity
- Causes sleep disruptions
- Adult digital distractions, overuse, misuse and “always on”



We know what matters

- Child development, early learning, child health
- Social and emotional learning
- The whole child
- Interactions, relationships and joint engagement
- Media mentorship
- Family engagement with and around media

A new generation of parents is emerging who are interested in, and able to, support their children's digital experiences but who are not themselves being supported in this task.

LSE Media Policy Brief 17, Families and screen time: Current advice and emerging research



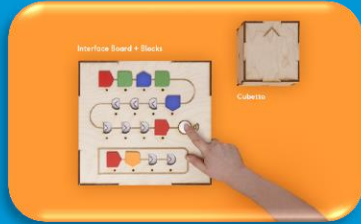
A nudge – All screens are not created equal

- Television or video monitor
- Laptop and desktop
- Smartphone
- Tablet with apps
- eBook Reader
- Digital Camera
- Digital microscope
- Wearable



Beyond the screen: STEM and tangible tech

- Developmentally appropriate experiences that blend hands-on investigations and digital interface design.
- Designed to blend coding apps with hands-on activities.



AR, VR & RR

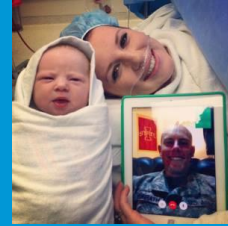
- Augmented Reality
 - Layering information from the digital world on top of your real world
- “Reverse” Augmented Reality
 - Real life actions get translated into your device
 - Tactile and hands-on
 - The emphasis is on what you do in the physical world
 - Not screen based or app/screen controlled



Screen time that's beneficial for children

- Skype Me! – Video chat for learning depends on interactional quality, socially contingent interactions

Skype Me! Socially Contingent Interactions Help Toddlers Learn Language, Roseberry, Hirsch-Pasek, Golinkoff, 2013
The Role of Interactional Quality in Learning from Touch Screens during Infancy: Context Matters, Zack & Barr 2011)



- Child Life Specialists and technology
- Technology for inclusion: Universal Design for Learning

There is a huge difference between video chatting with grandma and being left along to play first-person-shooter games. Michael Levine

Child Life Technology – Erikson & RUSH

Universal Design for Learning – ELS at Rupley

For your consideration...

Reimagine the screen to be a window, mirror or magnifying glass

Imagine

- A child looks through a **window** for a view of something beyond
- A child looks into a **mirror** that reflects his or her interests
- A child uses the screen as a **magnifying glass** to explore the world



Screens as windows



Screens as mirrors



Screens as magnifying glasses



If we think of screen as windows, mirrors and magnifying glasses...

- Would we count minutes of window time, mirror time or magnifying glass time and place the same limits as we do with screen time?
- How would teachers use technology differently?
- How would children use tech tools for inquiry, learning, communication and collaboration
- How could parents use digital windows, mirrors and magnifying glasses to enhance tech time at home?
- We need to reflect on and explore our educational windows of opportunity.

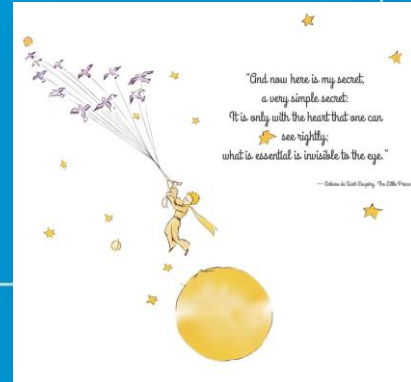


A final provocation

What is essential is invisible to the eye



...Let's not get so fascinated by what the technology can do that we forget what it can't do...It's through relationships that we grow best and learn best. Fred Rogers





Rethinking Screen Time

Chip Donohue, PhD



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