

## Technology and Young Children

“There is no substitute for regular and intense person-to-person engagement for good physical, mental, and spiritual health throughout the course of life from cradle to grave. Any facet of our lifestyle that interferes with that engagement will inevitably create dire personal and social problems in our culture,” according to Dr. John Biever, Pennsylvania child psychiatrist with expertise in early childhood mental health.

Most American homes have at least one television set, with the majority having more than one; 77 percent of American households have internet access; 96 percent of Americans own a cell phone, 81% of which are smartphones; and 52% own a tablet computer or iPad-like device. That’s a lot of screen technology.

We used to be concerned mostly with how much TV children should be allowed to watch, but now we have to talk more generally about screen time and how to use all these technologies in ways that are developmentally



appropriate and maintain the personal interactions that are so important.

### **Some downsides of technology and media**

- Prevents development of three-dimensional spatial awareness, especially in very young children
- Encourages passive rather than active play, and contributes to childhood obesity
- Often reinforces violence and aggressive behavior

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- Can result in disrupted sleep patterns, attention problems, and poor social and language development
- Replaces unstructured and creative play, physical activity, and social interaction

### **How to use technology and media in developmentally-appropriate ways**

- Follow recommendations for no screen time for children under two years old.
- Don't leave children alone with television, tablets and electronic games and be sure to monitor the content
- Choose shows and games that encourage collaboration with others
- Recognize how your own use of technology might prevent loving relationships with children in your care
- Look for applications especially recommended for children with special needs
- Develop household or child care facility rules for television, tablets, computer, and internet use

## R E S O U R C E S

*Facing the Screen Dilemma: Young Children, Technology and Early Education.*

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

<https://commercialfreechildhood.org/pf/facing-screen-dilemma/>

*Position Statement: Technology and Interactive Media.* NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center. <http://bit.ly/2llpHtT>

*American Academy of Pediatrics Announces New Recommendations for Children's Media Use.* AAP Oct. 21, 2016. <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2016/aap-announces-new-recommendations-for-media-use/>

Programs and families can contact the program leadership directly at [PAIECMH@pakeys.org](mailto:PAIECMH@pakeys.org) with questions or concerns.

