TALKING TO PARENTS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

TOO MUCH TOO SOON?

PRESENTED BY CAROL MARTORANO, HEAD OF SCHOOL
THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LONG GROVE
I WANT YOU TO TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE
DIGITAL NATIVE VS. DIGITAL IMMIGRANT

DIGITAL NATIVE
• Today’s students are the first generation to grow up surrounded by technology, using computers, video games, iPods, cell phones, internet, email
• They will spend less than 5000 hours of their life reading, but over 10000 hours playing video games and over 20000 hours watching tv

DIGITAL IMMIGRANT
• Some are better than others at adapting to their environment
• Turn to the internet 2nd rather than first as a source of information
• Read user manuals rather than letting program teach itself
• Reluctant to learn and use new tech
WHAT CHILDREN NEED FOR OPTIMAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- Emotionally available parents
- Boredom
- Unstructured Play
- SLEEP!
- Multi-sensory learning
- Limits
UNSTRUCTURED PLAY

• Open-ended, often creative and improvised
  • No direction from adults
  • Exploring, building, pretending

• Develops:
  • Intellectual and cognitive growth
  • Emotional intelligence, executive functioning
  • Initiative, confidence, problem solving skills
  • Sense of freedom and control, self-discipline

• The outdoors provide more opportunities: moveable parts (sticks, rocks, leaves, dirt, etc.) lead to exploration and creation. *Dirt is Good!*
Overscheduling children is unnecessary and could ultimately keep kids from discovering what really interests them.

Crucial for developing an internal stimulus which allows true creativity.

A chance to contemplate life rather than rushing through it.

Children need to learn how to fill their spare time.

Makes children self-reliant and delays gratification.

Compels creative thinking.
MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING

• There is no substitute for immeasurable amounts of knowledge gained from real-life encounters and hands-on, 3D learning experiences

• The rich, sensory, social and emotional interactions in real dress-ups, for example, vs. a fashion app:
  • Handling clothing
  • Changing clothes
  • Imagining scenarios
  • Negotiating who gets to wear what
  • Finding out how far you can boss a friend before spoiling a good time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED</th>
<th>NOT RECOMMENDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborns – 0-3 months</td>
<td>14-17 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 11, more than 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants – 4-11 months</td>
<td>12-15 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 10, more than 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toddlers – 1-2 years</td>
<td>11-14 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 9, more than 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschoolers – 3-5 years</td>
<td>10-13 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 8, more than 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Age – 6-13 years</td>
<td>9-11 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 7, more than 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teenagers – 14-17 years</td>
<td>8-10 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 7, more than 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults – 18-25 years</td>
<td>7-9 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 6, more than 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>7-9 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 6, more than 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>7-8 hrs/day</td>
<td>Less than 5, more than 9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DRAWBACKS TO BEING EXPOSED TO TOO MUCH TECHNOLOGY AT A YOUNG AGE

• Sleep problems
• Obesity
• Behavior problems/loss of social skills
• Disconnect between family members
• Difficulty filtering fantasy
• Addiction – raises Dopamine levels
• Lack of Fine Motor Skills
• Nature Deficit Disorder
NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER

• Linked to hours of screen time
• Lack of nature linked to depression, ADD, vitamin D deficiency and obesity
• Humans are hard-wired for nature, suffer when deprived
• The brain relaxes in nature, entering a state of contemplative attention that is restorative and refreshing
WHAT KIND OF TECHNOLOGY IS OK FOR CHILDREN?

• How much vs. what kind?
  • Children under 18 months should not have any screen time.
  • Toddlers ages 15 months to 2 years – avoid solo media use.
  • Ages 2-5 – no more than an hour/day, high-quality, with parents.

• When should my child be exposed to educational media?
  • After they know how to have free dialogue and write creatively, as well as complete data research, collaborative projects and interpretive inquiry

• To be modern, impressive or luring is NOT a good reason to give tech to young children

• Benefits of educational technology
  • Interactive, supplementing, not replacing something they can already do
  • Does it offer an alternative approach that exists in no other format?
WHAT CAN WE DO?

• Unplug – provide unstructured playtime.
• Create a safe and engaging place for self-directed play.
• Establish tech free zones and time (bedrooms, bathrooms, mealtime, etc.)
• Balance their time – technology is okay in moderation
• Establish rules, routines, limits and curfews, a family contract – be vigilant!
  • Some apps will let you control amount of time it is used.
  • Control or block content
  • Healthychildren.org
• Go a week without screen time
• Create emergency kit
BE THE EXAMPLE!!

• Put down your phone
• Limit your own screen time
• Make family time a priority – eat meals together!
• Establish hobbies for both you and your children
• Be safe

Children are great imitators, so give them something great to imitate.
WHERE TO FIND ME

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