

Handheld Screens & Our Littlest Learners



Our mission is to best prepare each and every child for the educational and technology world during the first 3 years of life by sharing what the research is telling us.

What We Know

1 Handheld, Mobile Device/Screens including, tablets and smartphones are **MAINSTREAM** and can be accessed by **ALL AGES**.

2 Handheld screens are **DIFFERENT** than other screens and impact the brain differently. They are designed to be continually accessible at a



close distance. Mobile screens reduce the brain's ability to take in the world around. Babies are more vulnerable to the negative effects of screens because their brains are fragile and still developing.

3 Recent studies link early handheld screen exposure with subtle brain damage and atypical early development including: delayed language development, decreased understanding of words, decreased interest in play and people, dysregulated sensory systems and sleep patterns, feeding difficulties, vision problems, and challenging behaviors (impulsiveness, moodiness aggression, attention).

4 Handheld screens **INTERFERE** with the level of human and environment interaction necessary for young, newly developing brains to grow, learn, thrive and form foundational pathways for mind, body and relationship wellness. Skills screens cannot teach little ones:

- Forming relationships, connections to and curiosity about others;
- Regulating emotions and coping skills when things go unexpectedly;
- Establishing healthy sleep and nutrition patterns;

- Developing creative thinking skills, imaginative play and cooperation;
- Developing physical skills including moving, accessing the environment and hand skills;
- Making meaning of words and the world; and
- Learning to communicate with others.



What Can Be Done?

We need to prepare brains **early** so brains **later** can have successful outcomes in school, including developing positive relationships with peers and teachers, as well as effectively utilizing and benefiting from technology tools.

The good news is we can **wire and train** the brain by being intentional. It's so much easier to start young! Parenting is hard work. Technology in the early years may seem like it makes the job easier because it keeps the child "occupied", but in the long run that is not the case.

Top 10 Alternatives to Technology

1. Be conscientious of how much you are using technology in front of your child and how much your child is exposed to technology through your use.
2. Talk, Play, Read with your child every day.
3. Include your child in daily tasks and Talk, Talk, Talk as you go.
4. Help your child learn to take turns and wait.
5. Help your child learn to watch others to learn new things.
6. Set limits and a predictable, daily schedule so your child learns what to expect. Consistent routines help children feel safe, secure and less stressed so they can be more open to learning new things.
7. Get outside as much as possible.
8. Get support by connecting to other parents.
9. The Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time under the age of 2. When you decide to start exposing your child to screens, do it with intention and boundaries. Do screen time **WITH** your child rather than giving a device to your child to do alone.
10. Have fun with your child. Be present. **YOU** are the best game in town and toy in the house.

