Technology in the Early Years

Start early. Start well.
Lead panelist

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Panelists

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From “Shelter in Place” and “Social Distancing” to the “Next New Normal”

• Adults have gained essential tech skills

• While juggling old and new roles

• Gone from “wondering if” to “relying on”

• Instead of worrying about screen time, let’s celebrate…Screens as lifelines
Today’s key concepts

1. Relationships matter most
2. Reimagine screen time as beneficial
3. Healthy media diet
4. Media mentors
Relationships matter most

Using media together leads to more learning

- Co-viewing and joint engagement matter
- Lessons from early literacy and language development matter
- Socially contingent interactions matter
- Look for interactive media plus interactions with others

Quality time together can include screens.
Avoid the false dichotomy

You can address problematic screen use and find ways to maximize benefits—it’s never either/or.

It’s not either/or
It’s not all tech or no tech
It’s not tech or play
It’s not tech or nature
It’s not screens are bad or screens are good
It’s not “children are more isolated than ever” or “children are more connected than ever”
Not all screens are created equal

*What we do on screens and how we do it is more important than time spent.*

Common Sense Media
Reimagine screen time as beneficial

- **Active** not passive or sedentary
- **Interactive** not isolating
- **Inclusive** not exclusive
- **Enhancement** not displacement
- **Meaning making** not meaningless
- **Creation** not just consumption
- **Tool for learning** and teaching
- **Lifeline for connections** not disconnections

…it’s never either/or
5 Tips for Your Child’s Balanced Digital Diet

For a healthy digital diet, include nutritious items from each of the “food groups.” Choose content that:

- **Engages**
  - Find interactive content that appeals to your child’s interests and lets him or her control how to explore it.

- **Promotes creativity**
  - Help your child tell a story or create art using a camera, computer, or other device and share it with others.

- **Encourages discovery**
  - Ask your child to identify a topic to learn about, and then use technology to explore, discover, and communicate what he or she learned.

- **Can be explored together**
  - Engaging in technology with your child promotes learning. Model healthy habits and positive ways to use technology to interact with others, play, learn, communicate, and collaborate.

- **And leave a little room for “junk food”!**
  - In a healthy digital diet, passive viewing of appropriate content is OK now and then. But remember: Even watching TV together and asking your child questions about the program turns passive viewing into active learning!

Adapted from the USDA website ChooseMyPlate.gov.

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Erikson Institute is the nation’s premier graduate school in child development and committed to improving lives through education, applied research, clinical services, and advocacy. It preserves the tradition of the Institute of Child Development’s legacy, and provides leadership to serve the needs of children and families so that all can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being.

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Media Mentors

- Help children and families **get the most out of technology**
- Address **screen time concerns and benefits**
- Help parents become **screenwise**
- Identify **learning strategies**
- Encourage digital **wellness** and living well with media
- Connect parents to **community resources** for early learning and tech
8 powerful ideas for parents and educators

1. Trust your instincts
2. Begin with what you know
3. It’s about relationships
4. Acknowledge concerns
5. Reimagine screen time as beneficial
6. Promote joint engagement and social-emotional learning
7. Model healthy media diet and “digital well-being”
8. Be a media mentor
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.