

Buffett  
Early Childhood  
Institute

*at the University of Nebraska*

# Technology in the Early Years

Start early. Start well.



# Lead panelist

## Dr. Chip Donohue

Founding director of the Technology in Early Childhood (TEC) Center at Erikson Institute and senior fellow at the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media



# Panelists



**Dr. Anne Karabon**

assistant professor of early childhood and STEM education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha



**Gwen Gideon**

director of the Omaha Early Learning Center at Skinner

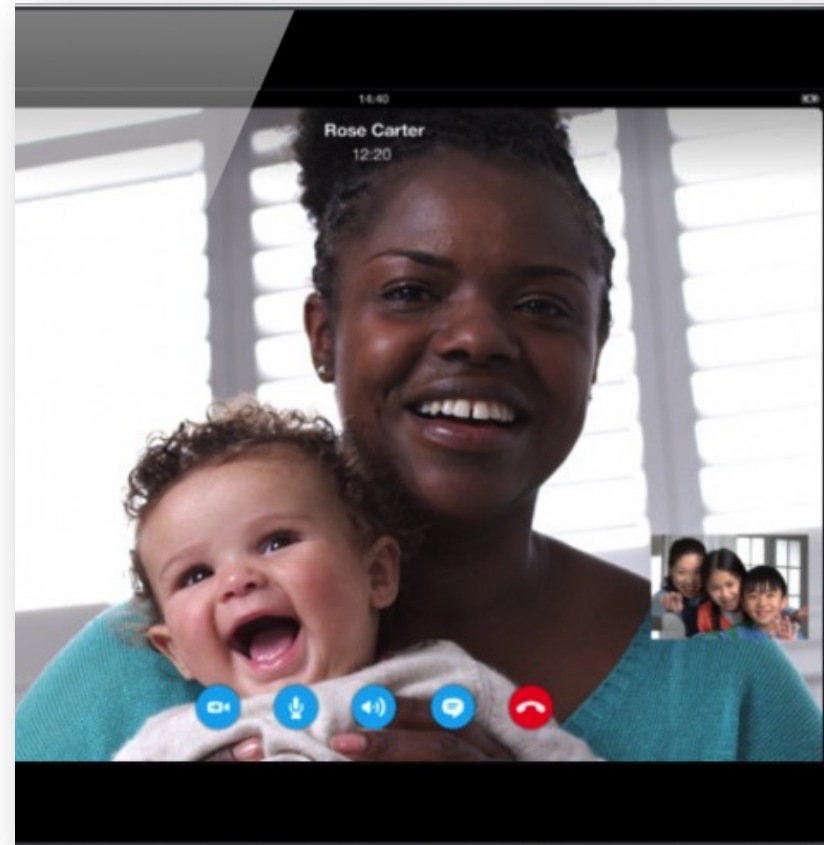


**Keeley Bibins**

parent of children involved in remote learning and an educational facilitator at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute

# 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***



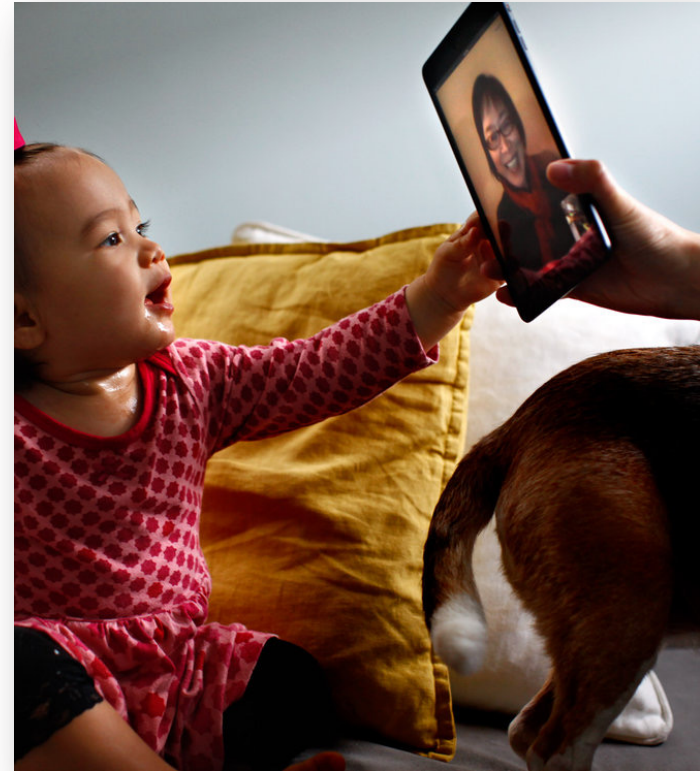
# Today's key concepts

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



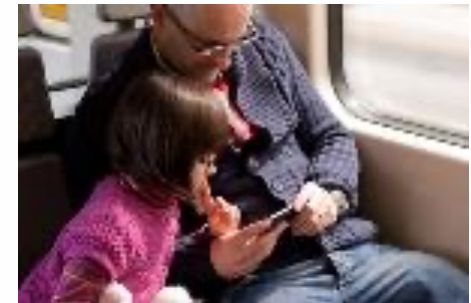
*What we do on screens and how we do it is more important than time spent.*

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*

# Healthy media diet

**erikson institute**

## 5 Tips for Your Child's Balanced Digital Diet

Choose content that:

- Engages**
- Promotes creativity**
- Encourages discovery**
- Can be explored together**

And leave a little room for "junk food"!

Recommendations from the experts at the  
**Technology in Early Childhood Center  
at Erikson Institute**

## 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.

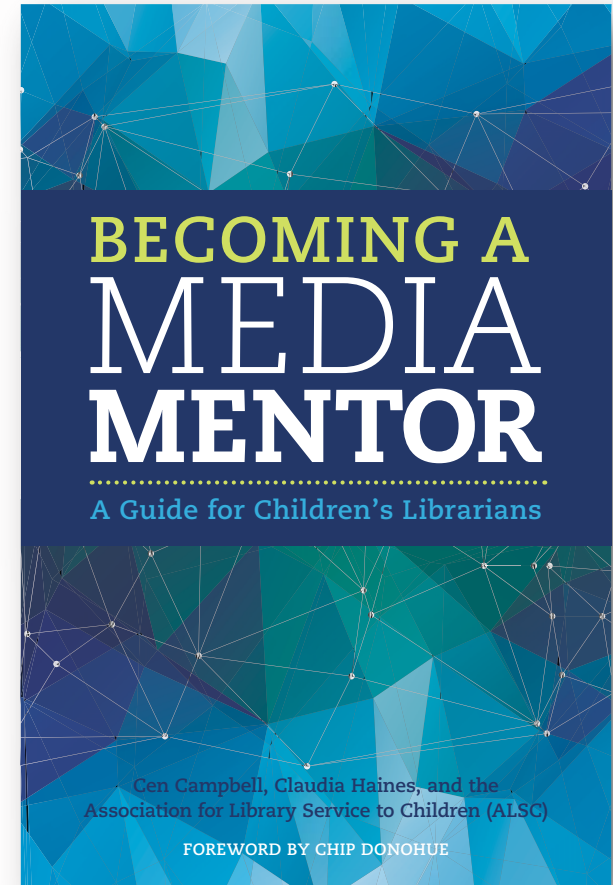
[www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu)

Erikson Institute is the nation's premier graduate school in child development and committed to improving lives through education, applied research, direct service programs, and advocacy. Because nothing matters more than a child's early years, Erikson educates, inspires, 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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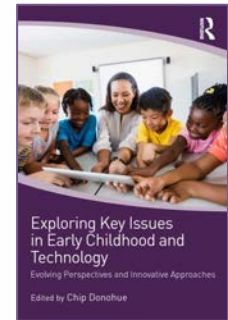
# Media Mentors

- 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.*

*Fred Rogers*