



Technology and Your Child: 5 Common Screen Time Myths Debunked

Technology has become a constant in our lives. Like many things we're exposed to today, the use of technology and screens is debated endlessly, especially their impact on young children. What are the common myths about children spending time with screens, and how do they align with research done in this area?

Myth 1: Screen time for infants and toddlers under two has some benefits



Contrary to some beliefs, children under two do not benefit from screen time; they learn best through live, face-to-face interactions with caregivers, not screens. Because children this young can't relate what they see on the screen to what they see in real-life, they aren't learning any new social or language skills during screen time. By minimizing screen time, more time can be spent interacting with your child, which is how he learns best.

Myth 2: Overuse of screen time has no long-term impact on a child's development



Screen time has the potential to be habit-forming. Early overuse of screen time is linked to poorer communication skills, problem-solving abilities and social interactions over time. Prioritizing back-and-forth interactions with your child during everyday activities is the best way to develop his social and language skills.

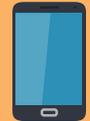
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Myth 3: Background T.V. has no impact on my child



For children younger than five, high exposure to background T.V. has been found to negatively affect aspects of development, including language skills and attention span. It can also distract children from play and interactions with caregivers. By reducing background T.V., you and your child can spend more time noticing and responding to each other, which is essential in creating a quality back-and-forth interaction.

Myth 4: Children over two learn best from watching good-quality, educational programs on their own



Screen time can be a positive learning experience for older preschoolers, especially when they watch with an engaged adult. Co-viewing enhances learning by allowing an adult to explain concepts. When screen time becomes a time for interaction and conversation, adults can take what children are watching, and make connections between what is seen on the screen with what is experienced in real life.

Myth 5: There is no relationship between the amount of television children watch and their behaviour



Children's ability to be calm and alert can actually be negatively impacted by too much television. Self-regulation is a child's ability to be calm and alert enough to learn new things, take part in activities, interact with others, and recover from stressful situations. Children exposed to excessive television (more than two hours per day) were found to have more self-regulation difficulties, especially if they already had behavioural challenges. Finding ways to respond to your child, including when he's less regulated, will lead to more long-term benefits.

For more practical and research-based tips to help you engage children in fun interactions that build early language and literacy skills, be sure to check out the **2020 Hanen Preschool Language and Literacy Calendar**. You'll find more concrete ideas that can be applied at home or in the classroom, as well as more tech tips to make the most of time spent with technology.

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