

Addressing Excessive Screen Time's Impact on Young Children

The Digital Age and Young Children: A Call to Action

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A Shared Concern

The digital age has fundamentally reshaped the environment where young children grow and develop.

- While offering convenience and vast information, it also raises significant concerns.
- The profound impact of excessive screen time are seen on children's development, health, and behavior.
- Excessive screen time defined: Aligning with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations.

Our Focus:

Regardless of age, and despite technology's potential, excessive screen time has a negative impact on early childhood.



The Reality

- Children aged birth to eight are experiencing unmatched levels of screen exposure.
- Eight-year-olds are spending up to six hours daily on digital devices.
- Children as young as 6 months are exposed to 56 minutes of daily screen time.





The Digital Impact

Children's holistic development is being hindered across all domains.

- **Emotional:** Research shows heavy media use impairs emotional regulation, leading to irritability.
- **Cognitive:** Excessive screen time compromises cognitive functions, causing difficulties in following direction.
- **Social:** The amount of media use is impacting the amount of in-person connection. Additionally, parent-child interaction is diminishing.
- **Physical:** Device usage is getting in the way of physical activity and outdoor play.

Significant Health and Behavioral Risks

Early device usage presents substantial health risks:

- Sedentary Behavior: Prolonged periods of inactivity
- Obesity
- Depression,
- Lower quality of life

Excessive screen time also leads to notable behavior challenges:

- Children with over two hours of daily screen exposure are significantly more likely to show: Inattention, Aggression, Hyperactivity
- Challenges in Education: Frequent frustration and lack of emotional regulation in classrooms.
- Desensitization: Aggressive behaviors often attributed to desensitization from violent digital content.



Addressing Common Misconceptions

The Argument: Parents and educators often claim screen time is learning time, arguing educational apps/videos are harmless.

Research Says: Screens are ineffective for teaching children under the age of three years old; they struggle to connect on-screen content to real life.

Implementation: Children over the age of three-years-old may benefit from educational content, but only at the recommended amount per day. To enhance the experience, an adult should navigate along side them (3-8 year olds).

Our message: While technology is a valuable tool, digital learning does not justify excessive screen use. Children thrive through play and face-to-face interaction.

Together, we can: Educate our communities on effective early childhood learning strategies.

Addressing Common Misconceptions

The Argument: Parents and educators do not have time nor resources for alternative entertainment.

Research Says: This is unfortunately the reality that many parents and educators face in their daily lives. It is a difficult barrier to tackle, however excessive screen time ultimately isn't a replacement for active, creative play.

Implementation: Embrace simple play, such as household items or the backyard. Allow children to be bored, so they can learn how to self-entertain and self-regulate. Additionally, reach out to the community and web, for there are many online resources that provide guidance.

Our opportunity for collaboration: How can we work together to provide accessible alternatives and resources for families and educators?

Real World Impacts

A Parent's Story - Myra's Story:

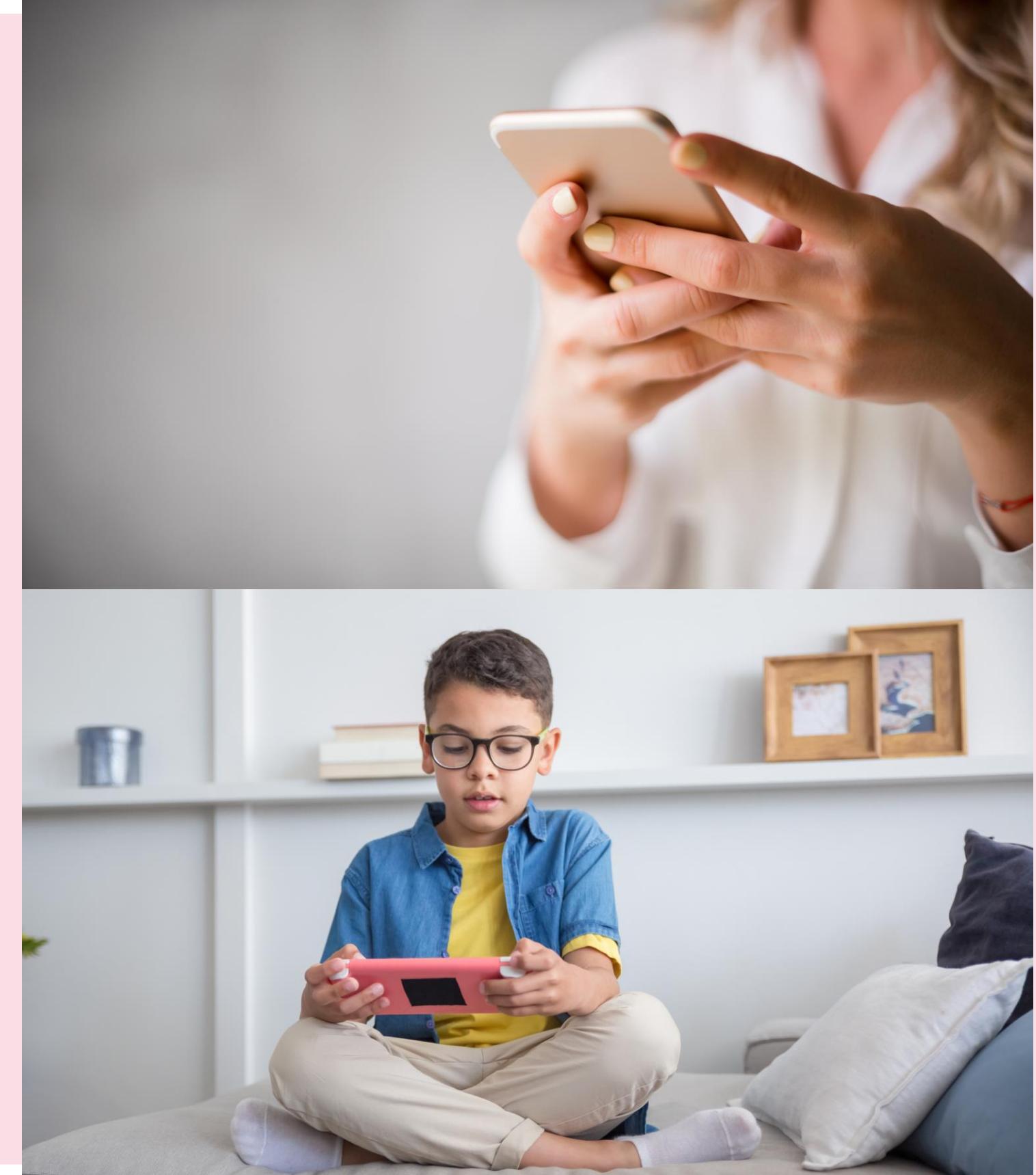
The challenge: Her two-year-old son's escalating screen time led to an hour-long tantrum for phone videos.

The Breakthrough: She recognized the issue and gradually reduced screen time over a few weeks.

The Transformation: She noticed significant positive change in his behavior. He developed a newfound joy in playing with his toys and rarely asked for the phone.

Insight: Breaking habits requires consistency and patience.

What to Consider: Many parents face this same struggle with their young children. How can we use our collaboration in a way that shares similar success stories to inspire others that change is possible?



Real World Impacts

An Educator's Story - Molly's Story:

The Challenge: Molly, a second-grade teacher, struggled with students constantly asking for “free time” on their computers and accessing unauthorized sites.

The Breakthrough: She tried many solutions to this issue but realized her approach was problematic. After recognizing where she went wrong, she established clear boundaries and began teaching responsible computer use.

The Transformation: Her direct instructions gave her students a clear idea of how technology was to be used in her classroom.

Insight: Implementing effective policies surrounding screen time can be difficult.

What To Consider: How can we bring awareness to implementing responsible screen use? Especially how to make educators aware, because they did not grow up in the same technological environment as today’s students but are dealing with it everyday.



Reclaiming Childhood in the Digital Age

The increasing screen exposure among young children presents significant, urgent challenges.

The evidence is clear:

Excessive screen time profoundly and negatively impacts children from birth to eight years old.



The Ultimate Goal

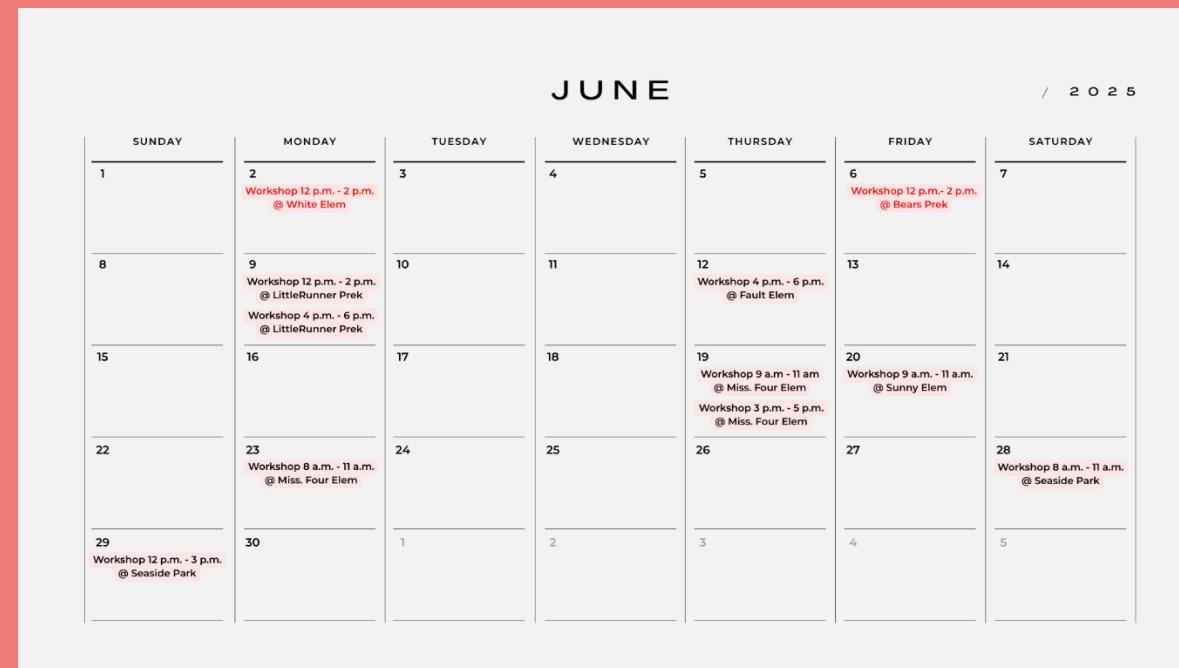
To actively learn, advocate for, and implement strategies that limit screen overreliance.

Reaching Our Goal – Workshops and Website

Workshops:

- Local workshops will be held each week. Currently, parks, elementary schools, and preschool programs are interested in what we have to offer.
- Parents, educators, and others are welcome to join our interactive, informative workshops.

Take A Look At This Month's Calendar!



Website:

The Digital Compass Association:

- Our website helps parents, caregivers, and educators navigate digital experiences for young children.
- We use research-backed approaches, provide practical tools, and connect the community through use of shared experiences and insights.

Where To Find Us:

- DigitalCompassAssociation.com

The Next Steps: Building a partnership

Our shared commitment to children's well-being provides a strong foundation for collaboration.

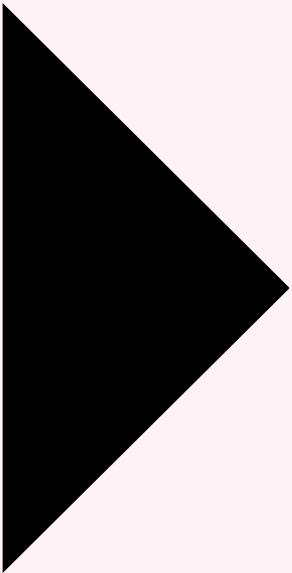
Follow Up Questions / Concerns

What to think about:

- Initial thoughts
- Most/least impactful opportunities
- How can we create public awareness, advocacy, resource development, or community programs?

Thank you for your time!
Let's make a change.

References



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