Technology and Young Children: a few more resources and thoughts

Interview with Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., on technology and young children, http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/using_technology.htm

"Modern technologies are very powerful because they rely on one of the most powerful genetic biases we do have — the preference for visually presented information. The human brain has a tremendous bias for visually presented information. Television, movies, videos, and most computer programs are very visually oriented and therefore attract and maintain the attention of young children.

The problem with this is that many of the modern technologies are very passive. Because of this they do not provide children with the quality and quantity of crucial emotional, social, cognitive, or physical experiences they require when they are young. The developing child requires the right combination of these experiences *at the right times* during development in order to develop optimally. This cannot happen if the child is sitting for hours passively watching television.

Sitting young children in front of a television for hours also prevents that child from having hours of other developmental experiences. Children need real-time social interactions; technology such as television can prevent that from happening.

On the other hand there are many positive qualities to modern technologies. The technologies that benefit young children the greatest are those that are interactive and allow the child to develop their curiosity, problem solving and independent thinking skills.

Children need real-life experiences with real people to truly benefit from available technologies. Technologies should be used to enhance curriculum and experiences for children. Children have to have an integrated and well-balanced set of experiences to help them grow into capable adults that can handle social-emotional interactions as well as develop their intellectual abilities. I think that balance and timing are the keys to healthy development. Provide the right kinds of experiences at the right time.

I think the key to making technologies healthy is to make sure that we use them to enhance or even expand our social interactions and our view of the world as opposed to using them to isolate and create an artificial world."

Other resources:

- PowerPoint by Dr. Audrey Cardany: "Who Benefits From Screen Media for Young Children?"

- PowerPoint by Dr. Alice Ann Howard Gola: "Screen Media and Young Children's Social/Cognitive Development"

- Click here to read notes from the presentation.

PowerPoint take-aways:

- 98 percent of Americans have TVs in home; 42 percent have TVs in bedrooms

- Average of 3:14 hours of media per day

- 66 percent allow children ages two and younger TV time.

- Child care – one hour on average in commercial daycares, 1:53 in home daycares

Benefits of screen media: basic reading skills, language acquisition, vocabulary, labeling novel objects, prosocial behavior, school readiness, emotional response, math content, music content, digital literacy.

Detriments: Obesity, inactivity, aggression, decreased attention span, replaces active socialization with other children, less parent-child interaction, displaces creative and free play, consumer-life approach

2011 AAP Policy

- Avoid TV viewing ages 0-2

- Set media limits for children

- Encourage unstructured & unplugged play

Dos and Don'ts of Using Computers in Early Childhood Programs
(http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=302)

Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8: **A joint position statement issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the [Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College](#)**

http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children

Key Messages

- When used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development.
- Intentional use requires early childhood teachers and administrators to have information and resources regarding the nature of these tools and the implications of their use with children.
- Limitations on the use of technology and media are important.
- Special considerations must be given to the use of technology with infants and toddlers.
- Attention to digital citizenship and equitable access is essential.
- Ongoing research and professional development are needed.

Examples of Effective Practice

- [Examples of Effective Practice with Infants and Toddlers](#)
- [Examples of Effective Practice with Preschoolers and Kindergarteners](#)
- [Examples of Effective Practice with School-Age Children](#)

[View Examples of Effective Practice (PDF)](#)