Effective and Responsible use of ICTS for 0 to 8 year-olds

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Current state of play

- Dramatic uptake of internet use by young children in last 4-5 years
- 60% of all Australian children between 0 and 5 use touchscreen devices (Coenena et al, 2015)
- Previously kids aged 0-4 locked out of online participation due to poor motor skills
- New touch and swipe technologies make it possible for the 0-4s to use the internet before walking and talking
Make it age appropriate
Make it playful

Children can read literature, watch educational television, create fantastic works of art, learn maths and science, and have video chat conversations with their grandparents on screens.

But they can also play age-inappropriate games, and spend countless hours passively watching non-educational videos (Kaufman, 2013).
Preparing for digital citizenship

- Children see people using digital media on a daily basis.
- Even babies can understand that there are rules around using digital media.
- Parents and caregivers need to decide what they want their own rules to be:
- Parents and children will soon learn if other people don’t agree!
When?

- Use ‘when’ to associate a time of day, or of a week, for media use.
- Explain that people take turns to use media.
- Media use costs money, and is one of a number of things people do in a day.
- Start talking about ‘how long’ early in a child’s media use.
- Try ‘magic time’ with younger children.
Where?

- There are lots of places where media use is not welcome, for parents or children.
- Other people may cause issues in public places.
- Sometimes media can help a child deal with boredom, but this can also encourage a child to ‘act bored’!
- Children often like to use media to share special time with others privately.
What/how/why?

- The media used should be the technologies used by family members. (Don’t feel guilty if it’s not the latest thing.)
- Choose when to let children make decisions around media use. It is usual for parents to decide in the pre-school years.
- Know why your child is using media. To stay in touch with a distant relative? To get ahead in skills? Decide for yourself.
With whom?

- For many young children, digital media are a way to stay in touch with absent relatives.
- Co-present engagement means that the media is part of a child’s social life – not instead of it.
- Siblings can be encouraged to share and take turns with media as with toys.
- Digital media are just one part of daily life.
Research Database

Number of studies by age of child studied

Note: The studies are multi-coded and most studies cover more than one age group. Even though a particular age-group has been included in a study it does not necessarily mean that individuals from that group have been interviewed in person.
Cross-national research

1. Investigates ways that adults introduce digital technologies to very young children
2. Examines the strategies that parents use to decide whether to allow children under 8 to play online
3. Collects material around young children’s online play for analysis, e.g., what they like to do online, and why
4. Uses a media studies, evidence based, perspective to inform debates about pre-schoolers’ internet use, with a special focus on risks and benefits for very young children
5. Compares the experiences of families with young children in different contexts, cultures and national settings (via a research network across the Asia Pacific region)
6. Charts the development of policy in the area
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