IN THE CLASSROOM

The presence of screen technologies within many classrooms and care settings—in combination with children's screen exposure outside of them—makes screen awareness an increasingly important consideration for early childhood practitioners and programs.

Key practices for early childhood settings

Maintain responsible use of classroom and personal technology[8]

- ☑ Set clear boundaries for use of screen-based devices in the environment.
- ☑ Establish policies that respect the personal privacy rights of all stakeholders (e.g., children, families, staff).
- ☑ Select screen media, apps, and activities that are free of any commercial messaging or advertising.
- ☑ Limit the use of screens for outsourcing tasks and activities related to teaching and learning (e.g., group times, transitions, celebrations).

Make developmentally-informed screen choices and policies[2,8]

- ☑ Prioritize hands-on experiences and in-person relationships.
- ☑ Apply knowledge of whole child development, and the needs of individual children, to determine whether screen use is beneficial and appropriate.
- ☑ Consider the cumulative time– both within and outside of the learning environment– that children are spending on screen-based devices.
- ☑ Avoid use of screens for behavioral motivation, rewards, or distractions.

Guide children as they learn to understand and navigate screen-based technologies[3]

- ☑ Communicate and model intention, purpose, and boundaries when using screen-based devices and media in the environment: Why it is used · When it is used · How it is used
- ☑ Encourage children to think critically about the creation and content of screen-based media: Who made it? · Why was it made? · How was it made? · Who was it made for?
- ☑ Maintain active adult engagement when implementing screen-based activities.

Scan or click for full Screen Aware Kit!

Scan or click for research references and recommended reading!

An Early Childhood Work Group Project
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IN THE CLASSROOM

Tips for classroom and care settings

☑ Put up signs for screen-free spaces or zones.

☑ Have paper and pens available for adults to jot things down while in the presence of children rather than use phones.

☑ Store or cover screen technologies when they are not being used for essential or required tasks.

☑ Turn off distracting sounds and notifications.

☑ Narrate your device use. Let children know what you're doing on your screen and that you'll be with them after you're done. This helps children make sense of an adult's divided attention without feeling ignored.

☑ Resist the urge to use screen-based music or shows during lunch or snack times.

☑ Use audio-only when possible. For example, when you want to play a song, turn the iPad around or cover the TV so the children don't see the screen.

☑ Minimize time spent taking pictures of children to send to families.

Questions for early childhood practitioners

Is a screen required for this activity?

Which is more active, the technology or the child?

Does screen use achieve an outcome that would not be possible without it?

How could this task or activity be done with 3D objects or materials?

Could this make children more dependent on screens?

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