



An Interactive Approach to Enhancing Literacy Skills with Technology



Introduction:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting the exposure to technology to 1 hour per day for children aged 3-5 years old but the reality is that children use these devices 4-5 times more than the recommended daily allowance.

Research suggests that technology can enhance literacy development as well as language acquisition while providing greater access to information, supporting learning, and motivating students.

What types of electronic devices and media are available?

E-readers such as first generation kindles and nooks were electronic versions of traditional books.

Touch screen devices such as iPads and the Nook Color are e-books with enhanced features. They offer a different reading experience; children can either read the books themselves or have the books read to them, they can access music that accompanies the stories, play story related games, color story related pictures and much more!

What literacy skills can technology help my child with?

We (parents, caregivers, educators) should be “media mentors”

Educational apps can assist with developing the following literacy skills: print awareness, phonics, spelling, new words, vocabulary comprehension, and even writing.

Print awareness

Understanding letters and sounds, left-to-right nature of reading, and recognizing that print is different from pictures.

Phonics

Understanding the relationship between the letters of a written language and the sounds of spoken language. Basic phonic skills include identifying the letters of the alphabet, learning upper and lower case letters, matching letters, and manipulating letters and sounds to build words.

Spelling

Apps that use crosswords, spelling bees, word builders, and games similar to Boggle to practice spelling and increase vocabulary.



Vocabulary

Repeated exposure to new words allows children to learn new words and their meanings. Some apps teach new words by teaching word opposites, synonyms, and homophones.

Comprehension

The ultimate goal of reading! There are apps to facilitate specific comprehension skills such as sequencing, developing word awareness, and mind mapping.

Writing

Apps that can transform your electronic device into handwriting tablet to practicing sentence construction.

Tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics for navigating the digital world:

- Treat media as any other environment in your child's life
- Set limits and encourage playtime
- Families that play together, learn together
- Be a good role model
- Know the value of face-to-face communication
- Create tech free zones
- Don't use technology as an emotional pacifier
- Apps for kids: do your homework



There is an app for that...

With over 80,000 apps (and counting) available, how will you know which one will be helpful?

Some general things to keep in mind:

- Just because it says it is advertised as being educational, does not mean it is.
- Does it target specific skills?
- Is it developmentally appropriate for your child?

Here are some things to keep in mind (four ways to tell if an educational app will actually help your child learn; Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff: May 2015)

- Apps should be minds-on, not minds-off
- Apps should be engaging, not distracting
- Apps should be meaningful
- Apps should involve social interaction support learning



Resources for more information about Technology & Literacy:

- Reading Rockets: launching young readers website
<http://www.readingrockets.org>
- NAEYC Interest Forum for young children and technology
<http://www.techandyoungchildren.com>
- Resources for free ebooks:
<http://www.freebooksifter.com/>
<http://www.freereadfeed.com/>

borrow e-books from your local library or check out <http://search.overdrive.com/>

for Barnes and Nobles Nook readers

<http://www.techlicious.com/blog/first-look-bn-nook-hd-and-hd-plus/>

- Resources to review apps
<http://commensensemedia.org>

