

# SCREEN SMART KIDS

Developing Positive Habits for the Digital Age



# I. Introduction

- **Today's screen-rich landscape means we are exposed to them in the home, school, workplace, bedroom**
- **Tensions exist between our desires and hopes for young people to be digitally savvy, well prepared for tomorrow's information landscape, and our concerns and fears for their healthy social, emotional, and physical development.**

# **Children having used a mobile device (51% smart phones; 44% tablets)**

- Under 2 years: 38%**
- 2-4 years-olds: 80%**
- 5-8 year-olds: 83%**

# II. What's Happening

## Children's Media Consumption is:

- Increasingly mobile, data-driven, and connected with other forms of consumption
- Increasing as children multitask and have greater exposure to new digital form factors
- Blurring boundaries between entertainment "channels" and devices
- Exacerbated by transmedia marketing directly to children
- Found in rich "bedroom cultures" and portable devices that make managing screen exposure a challenge for parents and educators

# III. What We Know

## Major Concerns of Children + Screens

- **Obesity:** increases in screen-based media consumption correlated with childhood obesity
- **Anti-social behavior:** increasing screen time linked with attention-deficit, cyber-bullying, exposure to violent depictions, isolation
- **Sleep deprivation:** bright screens before bedtime linked with disruption of sleep patterns, circadian rhythms; loss of sleep from online media consumption in the bedroom
- **Brain development:** today's "fast" media is changing the way brains develop, but we don't know if this will be beneficial or harmful

## **IV. No Two Screens Alike**

- A limitation of most "screen time" research is that it does not distinguish among different types of screens, or how young people engage with the media presented**
- The challenge is identifying high quality interactive media, and prioritizing applications and programs that enhance child development over passive entertainment options**

# V. Raising Screen Smart Kids

## Content

Being aware of what media your child consumes, Identifying high quality media using reviews, other parents, library resources.

## Context

Creating a strategy for making your home "screen smart", starting with parents looking at their own screen habits and being reflective.

## Child

Being sensitive to the needs of the child, and recognizing that peer influences play an important role. There is no one "correct" rule for screen time!

# Creating a Screen Smart Home

- **Track It:** How much time is spent on screens?
- **Think On It:** How much time is desired?
- **Talk About It:** Make it a family discussion
- **Balance It:** Consider everyone's needs and be fair
- **Reflect On It:** Don't be afraid to reconsider



# Resources

- [Commonsensemedia.org](http://Commonsensemedia.org)
- [Screensmarts.ca](http://Screensmarts.ca)
- [Commercialfreechildhood.org](http://Commercialfreechildhood.org)
- [Caringforkids.cps.ca](http://Caringforkids.cps.ca)

**Presentation prepared by:**

**Dr. Eric M. Meyers**

**University of British Columbia**

**[eric.meyers@ubc.ca](mailto:eric.meyers@ubc.ca)**