Technology and your teenager

One of the main concerns of many parents of teenagers, along with concerns about sex and drugs, is the possible negative effects of technologies and the lack of control of these. Dealing with new technologies will always be a work in progress for they are changing so rapidly it is hard for parents and professionals dealing with teenagers to keep up. Nevertheless parents need to be informed about each new technology their children are using, its usefulness and its dangers so that they can educate their children about safe and sensible use.

This article is aimed mainly at what is asked of parents in broader terms—that parents be disciplined and courageous in teaching their children that technology is there to serve us, to be used wisely and to not dominate us or our lives. Parents need to teach children and teenagers how to find a healthy balance between spending time using technology in safe ways for the remarkable things it offers and giving themselves time to remain healthy—to be active, to sleep well, to have times free of technology with friends and family and alone. Personal responsibility taking is very important in helping with this, as well as education about technology and media, so some suggestions for negotiating sensible rules for technology use with teenagers are also included.

In the context of this article, 'screen time' means time spent looking at a screen, be that a phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer, xbox or television.

Education about the effects & wise use of technology

Our children may be way ahead of us in knowing about (and being able to use) each new application or technological device; they may even be our teachers in these things. What they need us to teach them are the principles of healthy living with technology, just as we needed to educate them about healthy sexuality and caring for their health to minimise drug use. Sometimes there are safety issues to be considered in the technologies themselves, the Occupational Health and Safety issues, one could call them. However, it may not always be the effect of the actual technology which is the problem, but rather what the amount of time spent with technology displaces – other activities necessary for our emotional and

physical wellbeing. In addition, and perhaps the biggest concern for parents, is in what the technology makes possible that may be harmful.

Questions need to be asked about whether our children's technology use is helpful, educational, positive, valuable and healthy? This question has two aspects. Firstly, is the technology use unhelpful, even dangerous—like indiscriminate access to media content that may be inappropriate and damaging for young people, or the naïve use of social media which can result in loss of privacy, and cyber bullying. Secondly, is technology use replacing necessary healthy activities, physically, emotionally and even intellectually? Is it undermining

involvement in will-filled activity that helps build resilience and confidence, rich social interactions, intellectual debate, and creative activities which enrich the imagination and our lives? If the answer is no to both these questions, that is, it is not harmful or displacing healthy activities, then then there is no need to worry. If the answer is yes to either question, then changes need to be made.

Helpful information about the dangers involved in the use of new technologies, on mobile phones, cyber bullying etc. can be found through government health services and on the Internet (again government websites are a good place to start, perhaps with youth services). The aim of this article is to remind parents of the issues and to strengthen your resolve to be conscientious and courageous in helping your children to learn to use technology wisely, with a deep respect for their own health and wellbeing.

Education about Occupational Health & Safety Issues

It helps to think about, and educate our children about, straight forward safety issues around technology, like an occupational health and safety officer. The consequences of the misuse of a chainsaw, power tools or a food processor can be serious, even catastrophic, and the need for safety training is obvious. The misuse electronic technologies can also create health and safety problems but they tend to be more subtle and creeping and are easier to overlook. As protectors of our children's wellbeing, whether we are parents, teacher or other carers of children, we need to consciously model and teach the safe, sensible use of all technology, mechanical, electrical and electronic.

When you buy a new electronic gadget you need to consider the safety factors and consequences in relation to its use and then educate your children about these in an ongoing way.

Computer use

 For example, we need to teach them healthy ways to use computers, in all their present forms so that they do not compromise their physical bodies, vision and hearing. We need to teach them to sit at a computer so that they do not develop back and arm problems. We need to teach them to care for their vision by having the screen at the right height and resting their eyes regularly during screen time, by looking into the distance and so on every 20 minutes for 20 seconds. They need to know that if we spend more than two continuous hours in front of a screen we are at risk of developing Computer Vision Syndrome and that tablets are worse than ordinary computer screens because we tend to hold them closer than normal. Prolonged reading on mobile phones is likely to have an even worse effect on vision development. When the development of vision is still in process, the risks of damage are greater.

Long hours of use of phones and tablets where the neck is not held upright in a neutral position, but is supporting the significant weight of a bent head, can result in significant problems with pain in the neck and spine. Children need to be aware of this problem.

Our children also need to know that looking at a lighted screen for long periods alters the

melatonin, a chemical involved in falling asleep. The stimulating effects of computer games may also interfere with good quality sleep. They need to know to drink plenty of water because computer use dehydrates the body and to make sure there is a good flow of fresh air.

We also need to teach our teenagers about repetition strain injuries and how we need to rotate tasks and keep well hydrated during long periods of computer or video game use as well as texting to prevent these. We need to make them aware that the addictiveness of computer games can lead to people ignoring the signs of fatigue, thirst and pain which are indicators that we should stop right away. We need to teach them to give themselves a balance of activities, to listen to their bodies and to use their good sense.

Hearing protection

Just as with loud machinery, audio equipment (especially that which involves ear phones) needs to be listened to at a safe volume to avoid damage to hearing. In educating your children about this, it is useful to get a noise level indicator chart and put it on the fridge. (Search for 'dangerous decibels chart' on the Internet). Providing them with good quality ear plugs for the times when they cannot control the sound environment themselves is part of hearing education also.

Mobile/cell phones and radiation

We also need to teach children about the possible effects of microwaves and electro-magnetic radiation and be aware that some people who are particularly sensitive can be severely disabled by these. Many people experience the heating of the ear, even pain, with longer use of mobile phones, so the direct effects of electro-magnetic fields can be more obvious than with other ill effects like poor sleep or a more general health disturbances.

The effect of electro-magnetic energy emissions from mobile phones on brain growth is still unclear but adolescents still have a huge amount of brain growth to complete, so there is considerable concern about mobile phone use for children and teenagers. Most governments are now urging caution about mobile phone use by children. Some countries like France have legislated to ban advertising phones to children under twelve, and many countries urge caution with restricted use of mobile phones for teenagers up to sixteen.

It is recommended that parents encourage their children to limit their exposure by reducing call time, by not carrying the phone on the body, by making calls where reception is good, by using hands-free devices or speaker options, or by texting, etc. Again advice on this can be found on government websites.

Teaching children the safe use of mobiles phones is one thing, but dealing with their demands for owning one is another, so some comments may be helpful on this. Already by ten years of age the use of mobile/cell phones may have become an issue and parents will need to consider their options and make their own decision. Provision of a phone at particular times for personal safety needs to be considered as a separate issue from use of a mobile/cell phone for personal use and social chats. This may be a good time to consider *when* a mobile

phone is appropriate so that requests/pressures from the child can be countered with well thought-through reasons and a clear option for the future, "No, you get your own phone at age so-and-so ... but you can use the home phone now."

By the time children are ready for high school, the pressure will be considerable for children to have their own mobile/cell phones. By this age, most will have access to a family mobile phone for personal safety at certain times (mobile phones are quite appropriate for keeping children safer when on independent excursions with friends for example). However ownership of their own phones for free use whenever you decide to allow this should be on the condition that the teenagers are knowledgeable and responsible about the safe, sensible use of their phone.

Remember educating children about safety issues needs to be ongoing. In Australia in 2010, 75% of Fourteens had phones, with an increasing percentage of those phones having advanced features which allow access to the Internet, social media and unlimited other applications. The figures must be much higher now, as children inherit their parents' old smart phones. Again in 2010, on average, Australian children 11 to 18 years spent from over an hour (boys) or nearly two hours (girls) a day on their phones (Raising Children Network, 2010). Again, time spent has certainly increased since then. There are more and more issues of concern to consider here regarding health, personal safety, cyber bullying, inappropriate information and addiction. Parenting and government websites in Australia (like the Raising Children Network) provide good base line information but even these may not be up to date with the latest trends (check the year of publishing).

Rules about phone use need to be clear and uncompromising for the protection of teenagers' health, including protecting the quality and hours of sleep. More is said about negotiating sensible guidelines for this below.

Education about displacement of healthy activities.

Apart from the direct OH & S concerns, there is also deep concern about what activities are being displaced by the time spent on new electronic technologies. Our own children need to be made more aware of this and that their own healthy activities are not being compromised by their use of technology. The biggest concern here is the accumulated hours children are spending in screen time. For example, Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) study in the U.S.A. found some children 8 to 18 years spent up to 7 hours a day with various technologies, with TV still being the predominant medium. This is already a relatively old study, pre-dating the significant increase in the use of smart phones and tablets.

The disturbing question remains, what has been displaced in these children's lives by these hours being spent in screen time? Is there still sufficient time for play, for practical activities, for physical activity, for creating, thinking, imagining and dreaming, for real conversation? Indeed, where is the time for sufficient sleep?

Our children need to be aware of this aspect of the effect of new technology as part of learning to use technology wisely in a balanced way. A good place to start is to get them to record just how much time a day they are spending in screen time as a consciousness raising exercise. If you want them to be honest about this, you might want to tell them you do not want to

know the result but that you want them to think about it themselves. Two hours a day is fourteen hours a week, equivalent to a whole day of their week.

Reduction in physical exercise

The most obvious and easily measurable health factor related to the overuse of new technology is the consequent drop in time spent in physical activity. An Australian Bureau of Statistics report from 2011-12 found that only one in ten young people reached the recommended levels of physical exercise for that age group of 60 minutes a day, whereas more than two thirds of 5-17 year olds exceeded the recommend limit of 2 hours of screen-based entertainment. Here again is an educational task for the adults in children's lives to help build a healthy respect for the needs of the body. The same self-respect helps in the prevention of drug abuse and promiscuous early sex.

Children need to know that physical activity not only builds healthy bodies, but improves intellectual capacities, memory and alertness, as well as releasing emotional tensions. Help them to experience this in their lives, help them to observe how they feel after a good walk or run, kick of the football or dance session. How does this compare to how they feel after a night of TV watching or being on the computer? How do they feel in themselves, about themselves, on a scale of 0 to 10, bad to very good?

Health takes commitment and effort but in the long run makes life a lot better in every way.

Keep in mind that this may not be not easy for them, for with preteens especially, perhaps because of increasing hormonal changes, their energy fluctuates enormously and they can feel dead tired sometimes. At such times, what is more enticing than to flop down in front of a television? Or to wake themselves up again by the stimulating input of a video game? They need your help and example here. What is truly helpful, healthy for fatigue? How do you deal with fatigue? Quiet time to be with yourself with some music, time in nature, time for a nap, or even a potter in the garden or a walk with the dog? Fatigue is often emotional fatigue more than physical fatigue and physical activity, gentle at first, can be restorative.

When negotiating rules around technology use therefore, it is important to consider whether your teen is getting the recommended level of physical activity. A healthy compromise for requests for extra screen time might be to negotiate an equal amount of time be also spent doing something physically active.

Insufficient sleep

Another issue around excessive screen time and new technology use is the effect these have on sleep quantity and quality. The recommended amount of sleep for teenagers is between 8-10 hours/day, which few teenagers get today. A number of studies show that adolescents get an average of 7.6 hours of sleep per night. The amount of homework often expected of high

school students does not help this, particularly for students who work slowly. However screen time is also a common cause of later bedtimes, and it is recommended that parents have clear rules about when the phone, tablet, laptop, TV or xbox can be used and when they should all be switched off. It is also recommended that screen based media should not be kept in

bedrooms as this is associated with an extra 2 hours of use per week. Some children will text, Facebook chat or email through the night and we need to make clear that this is not respectful of their body's needs. Hours of screen time before bed (especially adrenaline inducing video games) make it hard to relax as well as affecting melatonin levels making it harder to sleep.

Education about risks to emotional well-being

Exposure to media

Practically unlimited access to the media on an ever broadening scale with each new technology has made it more and more urgent that parents and teachers educate teenagers about the effects of the media on our emotional well being. A more objective analysis as well as our own values based context always needs to be present. Most media content watched by teenagers regularly includes (or references) violence, sex, alcohol or drugs. When exposure to these things is occasional this may be a positive educational experience, but the American Academy of Pediatrics in a summary of all the research on this (see link in Further Reading) suggests a number of more negative outcomes. For example they found that the level of violence most teenagers are exposed to leads to greater aggression and a belief that the world is "meaner and scarier" than it really is; that highly sexualised media content provides distorted often unhealthy information about sex and sexuality; and that the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs is normalised and glamorised, leading to earlier take-up and heavier use. Clearly none of this is supportive of teenagers' wellbeing.

The American Association for Pediatrics, in their concern for the well being of children, recommends limiting media time to less than 2 hours per day. By 'media' they mean any kind of mass media "eg, television, movies, video and computer games, the Internet, music lyrics and videos, newspapers, magazines, books, advertising". On the positive side, they stress that controlled use of media and media education from parents, as well as teachers, can reduce all of these harmful effects, which points to the importance of parents knowing about, and involving themselves in discussions about, what their teenagers are watching.

When you watch programmes together you can discuss, for example, how gratuitous violence is often portrayed in movies, even those based on books of such refined literary merit as Tolkien's "The Hobbit" for example. You can dissect the underlying messages of advertisements and how exactly pop-up porn on computers denigrates women and is disrespectful of loving relationships. Healthy, savvy adolescents will recognise these things immediately and will be helped in judging them for what they are, compared with those other perennial values of beauty, goodness and truth.

Personal safety issues – social media and cyber bullying

With the rise of social networking, children need to be taught about cyber safety early. The same children who are vulnerable in the real world are vulnerable in the cyber world. They need to know they have a right to feel safe even in the digital world but they also need to be savvy about it. They need to know that no information or photo is "safe" to put up on the Internet even for a few seconds, because other people can instantly save anything on their screen. They need to know other people can identify them by putting together random bits of personal information, just as we can all be identified in metadata. They need to learn to consider the future in relation to what they share online now. We all have things about ourselves that we have not told anyone, things that we tell only close friends or family and things that we do not mind who knows. It is important they learn to be very careful about sharing personal information, especially photos, on-line, and only share those things they are happy for everyone to see, for the rest of their lives! They need to know about cyber bullying and that it is taken seriously under Australian law. They need to know they can come to you and you will do something about cyber bullying if it occurs (schools can advise you on this). There are plenty of resources available online if you want more information on how to support your child in this area. Phone help lines, like Lifeline, for parents and children can also direct you to help.

Distractions and addictions

Another area of emotional vulnerability exposed by the new technologies is the area of distraction, challenges to willpower and addictions. Teenagers need to be strong and sensible to deal with these challenges and the reality is parents have to be even stronger and wiser in order to help their teenagers to deal with the challenges in positive ways.

Technology can be very distracting. It is important to teach children early on to become aware of when the technology is distracting them from what they want to or should be doing, and to teach them strategies for what helps them to not be distracted. Frequent reminders from you are not sufficient because they come to be seen as nagging and are likely to be resented and to undermine your relationship with them. We have to find other ways based on teenager self-empowerment and responsibility.

For example, when teenagers have their own phone you can teach them to ignore the five notifications sitting at the top of the phone screen and to go straight to whatever they went to their phone for, do what they planned, and leave without checking those notifications. What helps them do this? Self-talk, small self-rewards? When they can learn ways to keep themselves on task, they have learnt a valuable lesson in focus and self-restraint.

Such conscious challenges in self-control also provide an opportunity to raise their awareness of the addictive nature of other new technologies, particularly computer games. Even the simplest educational games can be addictive as one tries to better one's last score by playing just one more game. What is important, is to be conscious of one's level of compulsion to play or one's freedom to stop playing. The question is who is in control here, the player or

the game. Let your teenager test themselves frequently by stopping for a break and going back to it later. This both protects their health and builds will power. Computers seem to distort our sense of time, so the use of timers, on the computer, mobile/cell phone or simple cooking timer, can be a helpful reminder to take regular breaks in games and in ordinary computer use.

In serious addiction, self-deception can interfere with the ability to judge one's capacity to stop a behaviour. Teenagers need to know that the fast paced, hyper-real quality of these new games are *designed* to make you addicted to playing, to make you choose to play that game over anything else. They are designed to be exciting and immersive and to increase adrenaline. They do this by engaging all the senses, using 'realistic' visuals on large screens, surround sound and controls that also give you feedback (by vibrating/shaking etc). How do you come back to such ordinary things as homework and sleep when you could be the great legend who leads your team to victory? Indeed how. What power over yourself do you have, to take yourself away from the game and beat the designers' odds rather than win in the game?

Other strategies to support teenagers. What helps?

We want to be able to use new technology when it is useful to us, but not to let it run our lives. For this to be the case, we need to be more discriminating and empowered to choose what we do and when—we need to be able to limit our engagement with different media at will. We need to know the effects different media have on us psychologically and emotionally, to be able to stay centred in its use.

Know what your teenagers are accessing & provide context

Parents need to inform themselves about just what their beloved teenagers are accessing. This is not to pry and control, but to bring a bigger perspective to what they are experiencing through these amazing new technologies. Teenagers may be more savvy than you in using social media and accessing new applications, but you need to know what they are doing, and seeing so that you can help them have a context for it and to maintain a balanced view. This is the media education mentioned previously. Talk about it with them. Why was the advice given in that show so good or bad? What makes this Internet site more reliable than that one? Why is that person's behaviour inappropriate? How does the newest advertising work using social media? How is social media being used to promote products in ways which make it seem that approval of a product comes from the consumer, not from the manufacturer?

But your interest needs to go further than this. What applications do they use, how do they experience them? What do they think of the different social media sites and how do they use them? Learn from them, take an interest in them, be excited with them, but give them wisdom and perspective. From there you can negotiate wise strategies for use, to be savvy about where they are being manipulated and to protect themselves from abuse.

The parent role in modelling the safe and sensible use of technology

It is really no surprise that a Bristol University study shows that children's screen time habits are closely linked to that of parents. What we do as parents models what we think is acceptable. While it should not be assumed by our teenagers that what is appropriate for adults is automatically appropriate for teenagers, who are still developing and more vulnerable, the fact is we adults are providing our children with basic principles for living with technology. So it is useful to ask yourself how you use technology involving screen time. How much screen time do you spend on work versus entertainment? Are you are modelling the kind of behaviour at home that you want for your teenager? If they see you putting in effort to change your less healthy habits, they will be more motivated change their own.

An essential part of modelling healthy use of technology is how to stay in control of the technology. This is particularly so with communication technologies which demand our instant attention. We first had only slow mail, then telegrams, then telephones, then faxes, then emails and now mobile phones that can be taken everywhere with us, into bed, on holiday, and demand to be answered immediately. If we let them. It is as if human development has lagged behind the technology we have developed and we have not learned quickly enough how to keep our right to having time, to privacy and integrity intact. For many people today the phone and messaging increasingly dominate attention so completely that it takes priority over everything else, including children's needs, regardless of the consequences.

We need to teach them that they have the freedom to control their own availability, and to protect important times in the day from interruptions. In this way we model that an active and creative life is important; that social life and uninterrupted conversation is important, that private time for thinking and dreaming and pottering is important. We need to show them that we can give priority to important times like meals together, family conversations, and 'sacred times'. By doing this we are creating a guideline in our family that "Here there is time for us." Rules about no texts, chat, or phone calls at the family dinner times support this. We do not have to be available to others all the time, other people can wait, and some things and some people may wait longer than others— we can choose.

We need to teach them to be strong in saying no, to prioritise and sort the important and the urgent from the unimportant and the non-urgent. We need to teach them that they can turn technology off or ignore the notifications on phones that ding, sing and raucously break the intimacy. The world is forgetting these things and they may need to be redefined and taught, just as once we taught children social etiquette. This is quite a challenge, given that most adults today are not good examples of this themselves.

The lesson is to be more conscious of exactly what you are teaching your children by what you model for them in your own behaviour.

Make your rules together

In teaching your children not to become distracted by and possibly addicted to their technological devices, you are also teaching them the skills to deal with other addictions. This teaching takes wisdom and subtlety. We have to tread carefully with teens, for when a teenager is resentful of restrictions, as they often are, and the parent is left constantly nagging or berating the teenager for failing to meet the family rules, then the teenager can turn their force of will power and resistance against the parent rather than in dealing with controlling their compulsions.

A helpful approach to making your role as parent one of mentor rather than dragon is to involve your teenager in making sensible rules based on information and the intention to help them to be in charge of their own lives and to do what is sensible with regard to health and safety around technology. This means being prepared so that you can share relevant information about the issues that need to be considered. You can share studies and information with them and encourage them to share what they know too. Sometimes it is a good to be able to do an Internet search to check out information either of you has doubts about, checking the reliability of the source of information of course. When you think you are both well enough informed to make some sensible rules, make a time and talk through any conflicting views and challenges until you both can come to an agreement about

specific behaviours. Be really clear here and write it down. For example: 'Screen time means use of phone, laptop and TV.' 'Homework doesn't count.' 'Using two devices at once doesn't double the time spent.' If you want to model your commitment to healthy technology use, you can include yourself in the rules. 'Dad is allowed 'x' amount of time, Mum 'x', teen 'x', and ten year old 'x' per week with a maximum of 'x' per day...' etc. Be open to your rules having to be fine-tuned with time, for unforeseen factors. Through this process you can come up with your family rules and guidelines regarding technology use.

Negotiate together what the consequences will be if these rules are broken. Sometimes teenagers can be surprisingly hard on themselves with this, so explain that good consequences bring steps in learning and moral growth, not punishment which in the long run serves no one. Keep the consequences reasonable and creative. Think less about the withdrawal of privileges, and more about what benefits us all, like acts of service to the rest of the household such as doing extra chores or cooking a meal, or a commitment to doing more healthy physical activities— 'must go for a half hour walk every morning for the next week' or 'for every minute overtime on the computer I have to do a minute of hard exercise.' Our rules and consequences are made to foster healthier living, not to punish us all.

The discipline of following through

The final, and perhaps the most important, thing to talk about in this process is whose responsibility it is to make sure these agreements are kept. We could agree that:

These family rules should be taken on as promises to ourselves. In breaking the rule we are breaking our promise to ourselves to keep to that rule. Therefore

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it is also our responsibility to keep ourselves in line. However we are all human and we all forget, get distracted or stop caring at times, so others in the family are there to remind us and help us when things get hard, but each of us is ultimately responsible for ourselves.

It is an agreement such as this, and the behaviour that follows from it, that turns this process from a pitched battle between parents and teenagers into a lesson in self-discipline.

Part of our discussion can be about the self-discipline which is required in these agreements. Adults and teenagers know that self-discipline requires effort and we don't always want to put in effort! We need to reassure our teenagers that the more effort we are willing to put in, the likelier it will be that we can find satisfaction in life.

Self discipline can be described as having four parts; delayed gratification, acceptance of

responsibility, dedication to the truth and balance. All valuable skills in themselves. In the context of agreements on the sensible use of technology, we show the ability to delay gratification when we choose to play the computer game after we have done our homework/the dishes/gone for a run. We are accepting responsibility when we say "I know I kept playing when I shouldn't, I won't resent you for reminding me or insisting that I accept the consequences of my actions." Dedication to the truth is about not lying to yourself or to others about whether you kept watching another show on television after you had intended to stop. Balance is about taking into account all the factors in our lives and knowing when to be firm and when to be lenient with the rules we have created for ourselves and others, so that we do what is best for each individual in each situation. All of this requires increased consciousness, strong will power and good sense, but it will be worth it for all involved.

The 'low/no television & other technologies' option

This article is written mainly for parents struggling with 'normal', but clearly not 'healthy', levels of technology in the lives of their children. For those who have already managed to restrict access to technologies for their younger children, like having very little television watching and only very limited discriminating use of other new technologies, you are practised at it and already know how greatly enriched your own and your children's lives have probably been by this approach.

Your children will very likely now be more creative, more active, more resilient, and have more life skills coming into the teenage years than the average teenager today. Hopefully this article will help you too, to now gradually

introduce your teenagers over the high school years to these new technologies, and all that they bring through the media and so on, so that when they go out into the world they will be more conscious and wise in their use of them.

However be aware that no matter how late you start to allow more technology use, that the temptations for your children (and perhaps yourselves) to fall into over-use, over-watching and overly passive consumption habits, will still be there to tempt you, simply because that is the easiest and laziest path, the path *designed* to get us hooked. You too need to negotiate wise rules and be strong with your children about this all the way through their high school years. While they live with you, it is appropriate that they be

asked to live by your family rules when these are based on respect for our health and on respect for each other and our basic integrity.

In summary

There are many concerns relating to the use of new electronic technologies by children and teenagers. Some are straightforward health and safety concerns related to the nature of the technologies themselves. Other concerns are related to what can be accessed through the use of the technology but may be age inappropriate or even a danger to children and teenagers. Finally there is concern about the healthy activities that are displaced by the time spent on these technologies. Parents and teachers need to educate teenagers about all these risks, and to help them to take responsibility for the ways they use technology so that they can enjoy the benefits that technology offers without sacrificing health and wellbeing or putting themselves at risk. A true challenge, requiring conscious, creative and courageous living with children.

Further reading

See the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations on screen times for children and in particular their policy statement on Media Education which includes more specific information and links to the studies they refer to.
(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/5/1012.full?sid=1b9a9302-baea-461f-a6a8-85366cdfe16d#sec-2)