5 MYTHS ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN AND SCREEN MEDIA

1. All screen time is detrimental to early learning.

Although children learn best through hands-on exploration, the reality is that most young children are exposed to screen media at a very young age and can learn from these experiences. What is most important is that:

1. Content is age-appropriate.
2. Viewing time is limited.
3. Parents are involved and help children make the connection between what they see on the screen and the real world.

2. Children aren’t impacted by TV that plays in the background.

Study after study shows that background TV interferes with children’s play and learning. Exposure to programming not designed for young children, even when it is playing in the background, is associated with a negative effect on children’s language development, cognitive development, and executive functioning.

3. TV at bedtime can help lull children to sleep.

Studies have shown that viewing TV within 2 hours of bedtime can make it harder for children to fall asleep.

4. Parental cell phone use doesn’t affect kids’ behavior.

A recent study that involved observing families at fast-food restaurants found that 40 out of the 95 parents used a mobile device during the meal. The longer that parents interacted with their mobile devices, the more likely their children were to act out.

5. The more interactive a screen experience is, the better for kids.

One study involving eBooks showed that more interactive features actually interfered with children’s ability to focus on the storyline. Although eBooks can still be useful tools for children, it is important for parents to help children focus on the story and not allow the technology to drive the experience.

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