

3 reasons why climbing a tree is better than watching a screen...

By [Cindy Glass](#)

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How much screen time is too much for young children? What is it about this age of technology and the need to understand the dynamics of our changing world? Are we bringing up a generation of children who are comfortably able to live in a world of humans and computers? Are we allowing little bodies to develop fine and gross motor skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, imagination and creativity? Or are we choosing to remain blind to the negative effects that screen time is having on the physical and cognitive development of our children? Or is it just easier to give in and ignore the very real possibility that too much time on electronic devices is stifling our children's ability to learn effectively?



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These are critical questions and, unfortunately, the answers are not particularly favourable.

Here are three important points for consideration:

1. Children learn by doing, not by having things done for them. Building puzzles, creating imaginative games, playing in the sand or climbing a tree require active involvement from children. They need to think, solve problems and use their innate creativity to enjoy these activities. Furthermore, they develop important motor skills. In a nutshell, children learn how to use their bodies and minds effectively. Sitting for hours in front of a screen involves mindless pressing of 'buttons' and instant gratification. This is clearly not ideal for growing and developing children.

2. We live in a world of other human beings. Playing games with other children, be it siblings or friends, involves learning essential emotional intelligence skills. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills are learned to a great extent, through interactive play. Parents who spend time playing games or making things with their children enjoy positive relationships and wonderful connections that cannot ever be experienced on a computer.
3. Children who spend time outdoors enjoy the benefits of natural light, the warmth of the sun, exercise and heartfelt laughter. Their developing bodies can enjoy the freedom of running, climbing, riding bikes or sitting in the shade of a tree observing the little creatures that make up their world. There is no computer-generated game or activity that can mimic these essential, healthy lifestyle activities.

We live in a world of increasingly demanding technology – that is a fact that we cannot ignore. But that does not mean we should deprive young children of essential life and developmental skills by allowing technology to override their natural and innate need to learn through active engagement with their world and all that it offers.

In short, little children do not need devices; they need trees and building blocks, puzzles and crayons.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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