



THE DAILY MEDITATION
The healthy, mindful life

Parents Concerns Go Viral As Childhood Screen Addiction Escalates



Last week, journalist Jane Brody published an article in the New York Times titled “Screen Addiction is Taking a Toll on Children”. It struck a nerve with parents around the world. The article went viral and drummed up nearly 700 comments in just a few hours.

What got all those parents fired-up is the shocking effect that screen addiction is having on our children.

In China, screen addiction is considered a clinical disorder. There are many rehabilitation centers around China that are dedicated to helping children and teens overcome screen addiction. Their draconian therapy sees the patients completely isolated from all media.

Here in the West, screen addiction is not considered a clinical disorder. Nevertheless, it is a serious problem. It starts early in a child’s life, with many preverbal toddlers playing with their parents’ phones and tablets.

In 2013, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a statement in their publication “Children, Adolescents, and the Media,” in which they state, “The average 8- to 10-year-old spends nearly eight hours a day with a variety of different media, and older children and teenagers spend more than 11 hours per day.”

How does that screen time break down? TV still comes up tops, but computers, phones, and tablets follow closely behind.

But what is the true cost of escalating screen time?

Screen addiction is seriously detrimental to health. So damaging is it, that many psychologists claim that reducing screen time is one of the most effective ways of improving a child’s wellbeing.

Integrative Child Psychologist Victoria L. Dunckley, M.D., says, “Addressing screen-time provides more robust benefits than any other intervention. I’ve been prescribing strict several week-long “electronic fasts” for about 15 years now, and it’s often the missing link in successful treatment.”

Let’s be honest. Completely stopping screen time for an entire week is far from easy. “Screens and parenting become a vicious cycle: bad behavior in a child prompts exhausted parents to “escape” with devices, which leads to reduced interaction and more electronic babysitting, which leads to overstimulation and more bad behavior, and so on,” says Dunckley.

But you, as a parent, do ultimately have the last say in all this. So, what can you do to help your children?

Here are 3 healthy, practical treatments for screen addiction in kids.

- 1. Educate yourself and your kids.** The more you and your kids understand about the effects of screen time, the more motivated you’ll be to reduce those hours. Most parents don’t actually read through the relevant studies on the matter. A shame. Once you truly grasp precisely why screen time is so important, you will definitely be more diligent of both yours and your kids screen time.
- 2. Understanding the difference between interactive and passive screen time:** Watching TV and playing video games are not the same thing. Psychologically speaking they’re completely different beasts. Interactive screen time is more stimulating, more addictive, and more likely to cause behavioural changes. Educational screen activities have just as serious an affect as watching mindless TV shows.
- 3. Understand the benefits of limited screen time:** Cutting down screen time leads to many amazing benefits, including: better blood flow to the brain’s frontal lobe, reduction in disruptive behaviours, better moods, and more compliance. Both parents and kids will be happier and healthier with reduced screen time.

These simple and healthy techniques work, and they’re significantly healthier than traditional treatment for screen addiction, which can, in some cases, include medications with dangerous side-effects.

Netherlands to Create More Sustainable World With Recyclable Roads

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STOP THE PRESS!

Why You Must Demand That Your School Protect Your Kids from Depression



We were relaxing at the office this morning when shocking news landed on our desk. The local paper reports that one in 25 teens attempts suicide and one in eight consider taking their own lives. Naturally, the news sent a tremor of anxiety throughout the office. We immediately started probing for answers. We were hit with a painful truth.

Schools are failing to protect our kids.

Mental health services in North America and the UK are inadequate.

In America, suicide is the third leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 24. This year, around 4,600 lives will be lost to suicide. One in twenty-five teens will attempt suicide. 90% of those

suicide-attempts will cause serious mental health disorder, including addiction, depression, and anxiety.

We know, as caring parents you want to change this situation right now. What can you do?

Amy Tran has been involved with education and labor issues for eight years. She tells us, “At the inner-city school-based health center (SBHC) where I interned in 2013-2014, we couldn’t always prevent tragedy in the lives of our students. Every week, some 250 students used our services, which ranged from medical services to counseling to snacks. From these encounters, I saw firsthand what data back-up: a facility allowing students, teachers and mental health professionals to coordinate support in one place leads to better mental-health access for teens who need it most.”

Simply put: demand that your school create a safe health-centre.

Scientific research has proven that school-based health centres (SBHCs) are effective at helping to identify mental health concerns.

Here are the facts parents need to know:

- SBHCs prevent suicides.
- Schools that have SBHCs have less emergencies and less hospital visits.
- Students at schools with SBHCs are 10 to 21 times more likely to seek help than students at schools with community health centres.

The facts prove how vital SBHCs are to our kids.

Disturbingly, despite the wealth of research backing them, only 2% of educational institutes in the US have school-based health services. Why? School-based health services cost between \$90,000 and \$400,000. It’s a small price to pay for the safety and wellbeing of our children.

Odds are your children’s school doesn’t have a school-based health service.

Don't subject your kids to a school where one in 15 teens attempt suicide.

Demand change today.



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