

SLOW TECH PARENTING by Patti Connolly

What do Slow Tech Parents Look Like?

- Are lovingly firm about their values concerning tech use.
- Know that it takes years to model and slowly, developmentally teach their child the needed skills to become an ethical, balanced, creative digital citizen.
- Have different expectations of how each individual child in the family will engage with digital technology.
- Know that their child need them to be completely available for when she initiates a connection with them and needs them to respond with full attention.
- Strictly limit their smartphone use for communication when with their child
- Keep aware of what's out there in the virtual world – the latest trends, etc.
- Learn the difference between passive consumption of media (TV, DVDs, etc.) and participatory media – especially interactive apps and games.
- Are engaged in participatory media with their child – “It's a great opportunity for what we call 'joint attention', or the interactions between a child and a [parent], the back-and-forth, which is critical not just to language development, but brain development.” (Christakis, 2014)

Slow Tech Family Boundaries

- Designate "Device-Free Times" for everyone in the family – mealtimes, bed times, family outings and visits to grandparents. For sleep to be restful shut down all devices one hour before bedtime.
- Ban handheld devices in all bedrooms.
- Have the family computer in the busiest room in the house.
- Place the charging station for all devices in one central location.
- Watch only one device at a time together. All eyes on one screen! "No double dipping!"
- Say, "tell me" instead of "show me." It's so easy to quickly pull up a definition, video, image. Instead encourage your kids to not know the answer. Let a thought, question or idea incubate. See what happens!
- Create clear boundaries on how to use technology based on age, academic need, and type of devices (see iRules by Ms. Hofmann)

Slow Tech Child's Digital Media "Diet"

0-2 years

Your child needs:

- To explore, learn to trust, and engage in “joint attention” with you
- No passive screen time (TV, DVDs, tablets, smartphone viewing)
- Her parent(s) to put away computers and tablets when with her

3-6 years

Your child needs:

- Uninterrupted time engaged in old-fashioned play (dress up, active outside play, creative, rough and tumble), playing with toys that require a “stick-to-it kind of attention”, exploring nature, listening to you read and tell stories
- Strict limits on her passive screen time of educational programs with you co-viewing ([Friday night-Saturday night, maximum viewing time: 1 hour](#))
- An introduction to how to participate with tech devices in a very limited, positive way by engaging in these activities with your child, such as:
 - Face Time or Skype with grandparents, extended family

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Email grandparents as child dictates what she wants to say

7-9 years

Your child needs:

- Continued uninterrupted time to play, to be actively engaged in real life experiences, to read and be read to, to pursue hobbies, to explore nature, to play with open-ended, creative toys
- Limited passive screen time with you co-viewing (Friday night-Saturday night)
- Time with you sharing more ways to participate with media through tech devices for no more than 15 minutes a day total, such as:
 - Email grandparents with parent typing for child
 - Co-create media (videos, music, etc.) with parent
 - Co-view media that help the child learn how to make something new, sing a new song, etc., use interactive apps with your child
 - Play creative, interactive, non-violent video games with parent
- Your firm guidance on how to move through boredom without engaging in screen time

10-12 years

Your child needs:

- Continued uninterrupted time to play, to be actively engaged in real life experiences, to read, to pursue hobbies, to explore nature, to play with open-ended, creative toys
- Limited passive screen time with you co-viewing (Friday night-Saturday night)
- Time with you sharing ideas above for 6-9 year olds and these new ways to participate with media through tech devices (no more than 30 minutes a day total), such as:
 - Read e-books
 - Research a question child has online with parent
 - Begin to learn how to keyboard and how to program
 - Set up an email account that you monitor and control the password for so child can practice typing and spelling in messages
 - Research a question child has online with parent
- Your firm guidance on how to move through boredom without engaging in screen time

13-14 years

Your child needs:

- Continued time to engage in nature in new, challenging ways (rock climbing, mountain biking, etc.), to pursue hands on interests/hobbies, and to spend time being with friends in active, "real life" experiences.
- Limited passive screen time on weekends only
- Opportunities to become an ethical, responsible user of tech devices (no more than 1 hour a day), such as:
 - Create media (videos, music, stories, etc.) with parent supervision
 - Research online for school or for own interests with parent support
 - Complete homework on computer in common area of house
 - Possibly have own smartphone to communicate with others
 - Consume media that help child learn how to make something new
 - Read e-books
 - Play creative, interactive, non-violent video games

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- Clear agreements with you about tech use tailored to her age. It's more about how she uses technology instead of how much she uses it
- Create code of conduct with your child: "Don't be mean, don't lie, don't embarrass other people, don't pretend to be someone you're not, don't go places you're not allowed to go. Don't post pictures that Grandma wouldn't love."

Age	How much screen time?	Participate in media	Consume media (TV, DVDs, YouTube)	Face Time, Skype	Non-violent games	Email	Use family computer or tablet for other purposes	Have own smart-phone (texting)	Social Media
0-2 yrs	Extremely limited	No	None	With parent	No	No	No	No	No
3-6 yrs	Very limited, active use with parent	No	Educational content with parent Fri-Sat.	With parent	No	To family with parent typing	No	No	No
7-9 yrs	Limited active use with parent	Engage with parent	Educational content with parent Fri-Sat.	With parent initiating contact	Play with parent on weekends (15 min. limit)	To family with parent typing	No	No	No
10-12 yrs.	Gradually increase in active use with parent	Engage with parent	Educational content with parent reviewing content Fri-Sat.	With parent initiating contact	Play with parent on weekends (30 min. limit)	To family with parent as child learns to type	Read e-books Research with parent (30 min. limit)	No	Age appropriate social networks
13-14 yrs	Increase in active use with set agreements and code of conduct with parents	Engage with parent supervision	Age-appropriate on weekends	With parent aware of who child is communicating with	Play on weekend (30 min. limit)	To family and friends using child-safe app	Read e-books Research for school, complete homework	Yes with clear rules and Co-Pilot app	Age appropriate social networks

Resources:

The Big Disconnect by Catherine Steiner-Adair

Slow Tech Parenting ideas at <http://www.janellburleyhofmann.com>

Christakis, Dimitri A. "Interactive media use at younger than the age of 2 years: time to rethink the American Academy of Pediatrics guideline?." *JAMA pediatrics* 168.5 (2014): 399-400.