PSA Bulletin

This week let's talk about 'The TECH-Effect Neglect'

According to latest statistics 40% of 5 -15 yr. olds have their own tablet/device

Why should we worry?

- If used responsibly, technology can enhance daily life. If used without thought, technology can displace so many other important activities such as quality face-to-face interactions, family-time, outdoor play, exercise and even sleep.
- Our children have the potential to have access to an 'online world', their peers and media influences 24/7. They NEED

> You'll be more available for and connected with your children if you're interacting, hugging and playing with them rather than simply staring at a screen.

> Co-view, co-play and co-engage with your children when they are using screens—it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning. Play a video game with your kids. It's a good way to demonstrate good sportsmanship and gaming etiquette. Watch a show with them; you will have the opportunity to introduce and share your own life experiences and perspectives—and guidance.

limits and restrictions and not just our words of advice. They learn a great deal from what they see. This means that as parents we must also consider our own usage and behaviours as their role models as well as monitoring what they may see online.

- We all need time to be 'unplugged' – it allows for creativity as well as rest.
- Do you know how to play… without the use of technology? Playtime should be a daily priority.
- Do you notice attention-seeking behaviours from your children? How often are you able to give your undivided attention to them? Are you emotionally-disconnected because of a screen?
- In your home is screen time 'alone time'? Is 'tech' being used as a babysitter? Don't just monitor them online—interact with them, so you can understand what they are doing and be a part of it.
- Do you turn to 'tech' to pacify the kids? Children need emotionally available adults to respond to their 'big emotions' not a screen. Children are tech-savvy from an early age these days but many are lacking in emotional skills.

"Even though technology can provide wonderful opportunities, it can also have negative effects on health and well-being. With a little effort and a commitment to being fully present, parents can easily make technology work for them rather than against them."
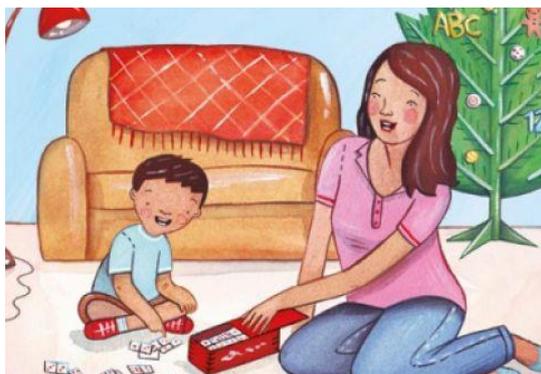
Tips for families – what your primary school wants you to know!

1. Create no tech zones. Bedrooms are not the safest place for children to disappear to their tech. Shared/communal spaces ensure that parents are more likely able to monitor activity and also find themselves more likely to propose alternative engagement/entertainment. It's not ok for children to be out of sight and out of mind.

2. Protect certain times of the day. Mealtimes and bedtime routines should not be compromised by screens. Families who can 'down-the-tech' learn to communicate more effectively with each other. Set boundaries about how much time can be spent on screens. Research shows that families experiencing behaviour issues, obesity and poor sleep are very often linked to excessive screen time. Parents have the responsibility to promote a healthy balance and lifestyle. Role-model that despite having smart tech at our finger tips, we too, as adults, can put 'work' or 'social media' down and choose to interact or entertain ourselves differently.

3. Toddlers and young children's developing brains need unstructured playtime and human interaction. Remove the tech to foster this environment naturally within your home. Health professionals can sadly detect very easily the children who have experienced 'lack of interaction' and this can affect their growth and development.

4. Take an active interest in what your child enjoys to play or view on screens. Ignorance cannot be bliss. It is our job as adults to be sure about what our children are doing on screens. Educate yourself about apps and games that are popular before making a decision to allow it to be downloaded. Use the parental controls and restrictions in settings as well as setting devices up to filter and block content.

5. Be firm about what is not appropriate viewing – age ratings are in place for a reason. Safeguarding concerns are often flagged in schools when children innocently comment to their peers or teachers about what they have been watching/playing. Parents have a responsibility to protect their children from viewing inappropriate content (sex, drugs, violence etc). This can be even harder to manage when you have children in the home who are older and perhaps allowed to access different content to that of their younger siblings.

6. Introduce 'tech' and 'screen time' as a privilege rather than a right! Use this to your advantage when considering your house rules discipline. Privileges are earnt

7. Pre-teens should not have social media accounts. They are not emotionally prepared in terms of their development to use these platforms safely and as a result are incredibly vulnerable. Please do not support them to sign up to something that means you have to 'lie' about their age.

8. Children with access to gaming devices should have these set to a 'child's account' that enables a responsible parent to safely monitor, restrict and protect their child.

How to contact me:

It's never too soon to make contact if you have any concerns. You can reach me via text on the PSA mobile **07903 613074** or via email,

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Normal working days are Tuesday and Wednesday 8.00-16.00 and Thursday 8.00-13:00