New Media with Young Children

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New Media with Two and Under
A Look at Maryland Public Libraries’ Best Practices

By Julie Raneli, Queen Anne’s County Library

We have all heard the statement: No screen time for children under two. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) drafted their media use statement prior to April 2010, when the first iPad was released. However with this new touch-screen technology, screen time for young children can now mean interactive play on the lap of a caregiver rather than passive viewing.

Dimitri Chrastas, M.D. of Seattle Children’s Research Institute and a co-author of the AAP statement believes that “judicious use of interactive media is acceptable for children under two years of age.” He summarizes the characteristics of traditional toys and touch-screen devices and stresses the “promotion of joint attendance, meaning the device can enable or facilitate adults and children interacting with one another.”

While many librarians embrace the use of new media with children, using iPads with children ages two and under remains somewhat controversial. In the annual story time surveys conducted in St. Mary’s and Calvert Counties, librarians report a 50/50 split of parents strong against new media in story times. Some parents say, “we come to the library to get away from screens”! On the other hand, other parents are very interested in the library’s guidance on the use of age-appropriate new media.

At least seven public library systems around the state integrate iPads into story times with children ages two and under. These libraries are making abstract concepts real for children, promoting Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) five best practices (read, sing, play, talk, write) and fostering a joint engagement approach to new media.

To help young children develop general knowledge of the world around them, librarians around the state are using iPads to make abstract concepts real. In Baltimore County, for example, a librarian might increase prior knowledge by talking about leaves, showing...
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