



COMPUTER & INTERNET USE

In recent years, with the rapid technological developments particularly computer/information technology, computer and Internet use have become integral part of our daily life and have significantly affected our education system as well as our social network.

Now the question arises how much use of computer is good use or how much is overuse. Is computer use good for children?

The following information is adapted and sourced from <http://familyinternet.about.com>.

There is no right or wrong time to introduce your child to the family computer. Much like deciding when to buy the first bike, or when your child can go out alone with friends, the choice will be based on your parenting style, your values and, most importantly, your child's readiness. Teach your children how to use the computer and how to communicate online as well as how to remain safe.

The following tips will help you make sure your child stays safe and healthy while using the computer:

1. Keep the computer in a shared space, especially if you have internet access. Keep an eye on what your child is doing and viewing. Children can easily access disturbing material or content including games with racist, sexist or violent components or messages. You could consider installing filters or parental control software on your computer.
2. Teach your child four simple rules for internet use and safety:
 - 1) no sharing personal details,
 - 2) no meeting strangers,
 - 3) no sharing passwords, and
 - 4) stick to the time limit.
3. Use the Government film and computer classifications to decide what your child should be allowed to play. G-rated games and some PG-rated games are suitable for school-age children (although many PG-rated games do contain violence). Games and activities with an M rating are not appropriate.

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4. Some research is showing that video game and cartoon violence can be harmful and that playing very fast-paced video games has an effect, at least on children's behaviour in the short term. Try to avoid computer games that make violence look 'cool', or that show violence as a way to get what you want. If children see heroes being rewarded for violent acts, they might want to copy this pattern. Also, it can make them less sensitive to violence in the real world.
 5. Make sure your child has access to a range of stimulating and entertaining activities – books, visits to the library, physical exercise and so on. This way, your child won't be able to say there's nothing to do except play computer games!
 6. Make sure your child takes regular breaks from the computer – at least every 20 minutes. Watch your child's overall screen time too. Some studies have linked too much computer use to increased risk of obesity, seizures and physical problems like hand injuries, eye strain, and back and wrist problems.
 7. A good balance of developmental activities with homework, sport and music should leave little time for computers.

Reference

1. Computer use children in Canada, <http://www.ehow.com>
2. <http://familyinternet.about.com>