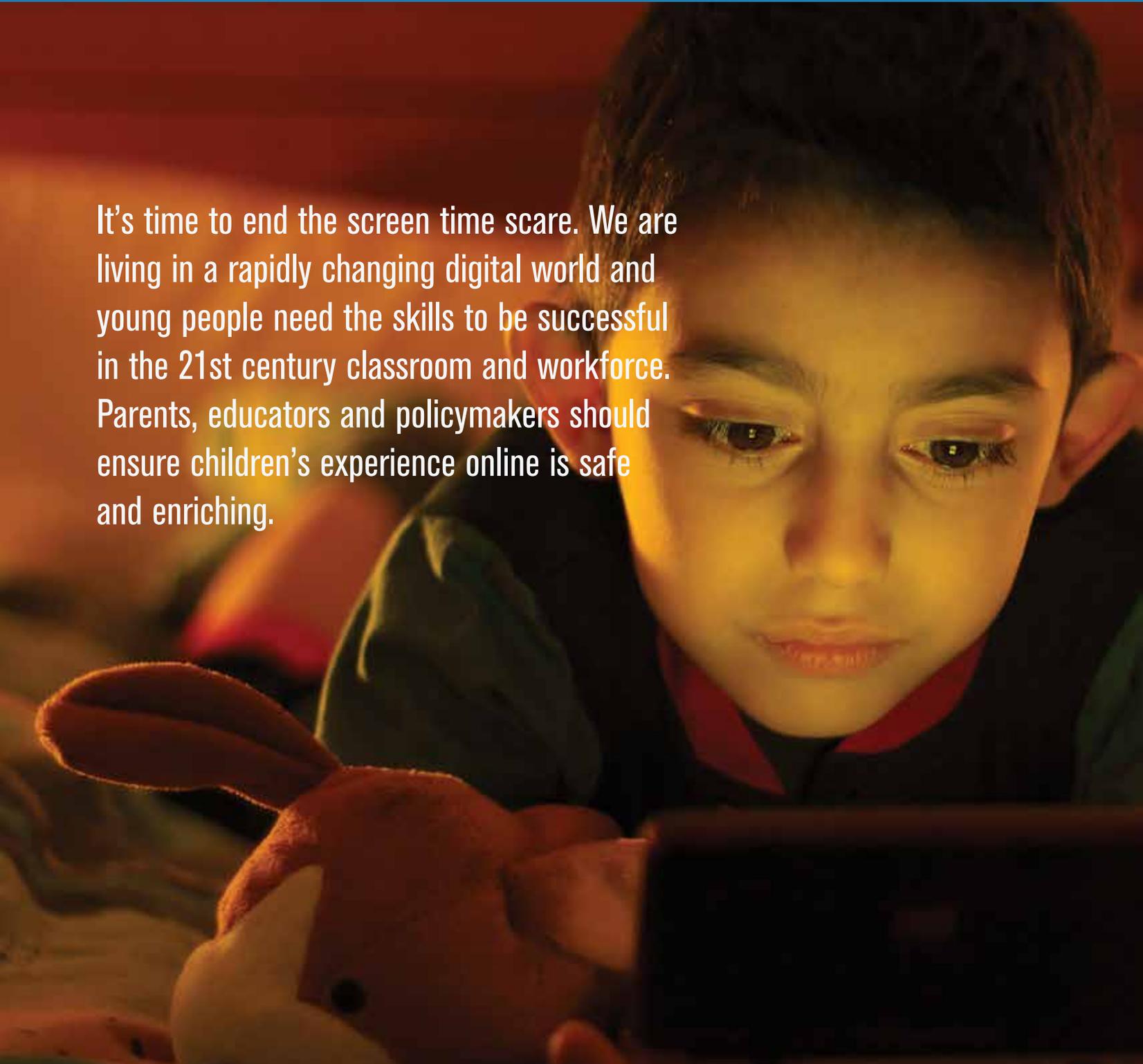


SCREEN TIME FOR KIDS: GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

It's time to end the screen time scare. We are living in a rapidly changing digital world and young people need the skills to be successful in the 21st century classroom and workforce. Parents, educators and policymakers should ensure children's experience online is safe and enriching.

A young boy with dark hair is looking intently at a screen, likely a tablet or smartphone. The lighting is warm and focused on his face. In the foreground, a brown stuffed rabbit is visible, partially obscuring the bottom left corner of the frame. The background is dark and out of focus.

WHAT DO CHILDREN LEARN ON THE INTERNET?



READING, WRITING, AND ART

The text in popular video games averages 12th-grade reading level – four grades higher than newspaper text. Young people can improve their writing and art skills on free sites like Wattpad and DeviantArt.

EXPERTISE IN THEIR INTERESTS

Young people follow their interests and desire to learn through educational and entertainment websites. They turn to YouTube videos, for example, to learn how to take better photographs, cook, interpret a complicated gaming manual, learn a new language, delve into religion, make science experiments, learn the breeds of animals in the world, play a musical instrument and countless other things.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

As young people use mobile phones, tablets, computers and access different apps and games, they gain skills – such as communication, creativity, responsibility, resilience, innovation and media literacy – needed to succeed in the 21st century.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

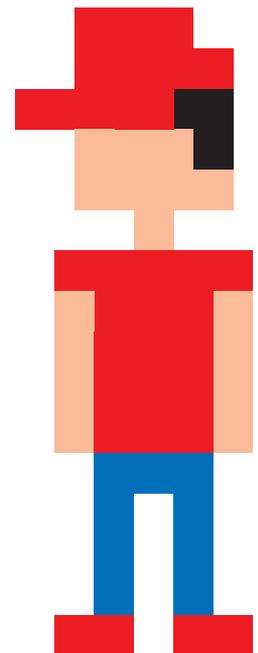
There are many online sites where young people can engage as citizens, ranging from the formal (e.g. the UN's youth programme) to the activist (e.g. The Harry Potter Alliance).

TECHNICAL SKILLS

More than 300 million youths are online, learning coding and computer programming through free sites like MIT's Scratch.

TEST PREPARATION

Millions of students have taken advantage of free online standardized preparatory courses offered by Khan Academy, the College Board, and other scholastic organization websites and apps.



QUALITY SCREEN TIME



Research shows that restricting screen time alone does not protect children from harmful contact, such as cyberbullying, and it may lead children to evade parental rules altogether.

Limits on screen time can directly reduce your children's opportunities to learn and participate online.

Instead, focus on the quality of your child's screen time. How, where and why do your children use screen media? Does it support their interests and friendships? Of course, you will also want to think about whether it is linked to loss of learning or sleep or exercise, but remember that these problems can have other causes.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Talk with your children about what they do online and who they interact with.
- Ask your children to help create family rules and norms and respect their views.
- Try to focus more on positive uses of digital media (what they can do, what's good to do) rather than negative uses (what not to do, when they have to turn it off).
- If you are worried about screen time, ask yourself:
 - * Is my child physically healthy and sleeping enough?
 - * Is my child connecting socially with family and friends online or offline?
 - * Is my child engaged with and achieving in school?
 - * Is my child pursuing interests and hobbies (in any form)?
 - * Is my child having fun and learning in their use of digital media?

Only when your answers are mostly "no" do you need to focus on addressing problematic use.

- Stress that technology is a tool, so it's how you use it that matters. Share with your children how you use the internet as a tool, and the benefits and problems you experience for yourself.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommends:



Creating a personalised family media plan, including rules for children and their parents, and designated 'media free' times.

Rather than thinking of parents as policing or controlling or monitoring their children's media use, parents should think of themselves as their child's "media mentor."

RESOURCES

Websites that provide evidence-based resources provide myriad tips and advice for parents, educators and child-care providers. They include:



BBC's CBeebies
cbeebies.com



Family
Online Safety
Institute

Family Online Safety Institute
fosi.org



Net Smartz
netsmartz.org



CANADA'S CENTRE
FOR DIGITAL AND
MEDIA LITERACY

Centre for Digital and Media Literacy
mediasmarts.ca



Get Net Wise
getnetwise.org



Parent Zone
parentzone.org.uk



Common Sense Media
commonsensemedia.org



Internet Matters
internetmatters.org



The London School of Economics
and Political Science Parenting
for a Digital Future
www.parenting.digital



Connect Safely
connectsafely.org



Net Family News
netfamilynews.org

SOURCES

Media Policy Brief, "Families and Screen time: Current Advice and Emerging Research," by Alicia Blum-Ross and Sonia Livingstone; American Academy of Pediatrics; "The Parent App" by Lynn Schofield Clark; MIT Media Lab; Common Sense Media; London School of Economics and and Political Science's "Parenting for a Digital Future" blog; Family Online Safety Institute.

CREDITS

Produced by
Connected Learning Research Network



Connected Learning Alliance

