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Description

A 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation says children are online nearly every minute they are out of school and not sleeping. Parry Aftab, of WiredSafety, and parenting expert Michele Borba speak about the importance of 'disconnected time.'

Keywords

Technology, Children, Kids, Parenting, Communication, Connecting, Families, Family, Cell, Cellular, Smart, Phones, Email, Twitter, Tweets, Texts, Messages, Computers, Laptops, Screens, Media, Video, Games, Electronic, Devices, TV, Television, School, Study, Grades, Rules, Growth, Development, Health, Wellness, Multitasking, Relationships, Parry Aftab, WiredSafety, Michele Borba, Psychology

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Kids Hooked on Electronics
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Transcript

Kids Hooked on Electronics

Parry Aftab is the executive director of WiredSafety and Michele Borba is a parenting expert.

Good morning to you both.

Ms. MICHELE BORBA (Educational Psychologist): Good morning.
Ms. PARRY AFTAB: Good morning, ladies.
VIEIRA: Good morning. Michele, I want to start with you.
Ms. BORBA: Yeah.
VIEIRA: Because the numbers sound staggering.
Ms. BORBA: Yeah.
VIEIRA: The average American kid now spends practically every waking moment outside of school either using a smartphone, an iPod, watching TV, playing video games. My gut reaction is it has to be bad, but what does it say to you? What...
Ms. BORBA: Well, the bottom line is we really don't know because it's redefining a whole sense of childhood. We don't know neurological implications, we don't know how this is going to impact our kids socially. So let's just bottom line, start getting a little bit more commonsensical about it. The key question is, what's your kid tuning out of? And my key point is, you. If he's watching seven and a half hours of all of this other media, it means that face-to-face relationship of just being with you and connecting with you is gone, your influence goes down.

VIEIRA: But is part of the adjustment that parents have to make sort of accepting that this is reality for kids now?
Ms. BORBA: Yes.
VIEIRA: This is the way they live their lives.
Ms. BORBA: Yes. It is clearly the way they live their lives, so we've got to step up to that plate, get a little more crafty and figure it out. The other thing is figure out how we're going to make that lost thing
called face-to-face interaction that our kids may be losing, build that back into their lives.

VIEIRA: You know, Parry, you say when it comes to monitoring and protecting our children, we have to pay more attention to the three C's. What are the three C's?

Ms. AFTAB: The three C's are contact, content and cost. So every time we put technology into the hands of our kids, we need to look at it and say can our kids talk to others? Can others talk to our kids?

Ms. BORBA: Mm-hmm.

Ms. AFTAB: Can they share or view information or content? And what can they do that's going to cost them in values, time and money?

VIEIRA: So how--Parry, how do you know when it's too much?

Ms. AFTAB: Well, you know, we always know when it's too much. Our kids' grades are going down, they're not talking to us, we're uncomfortable. What we need to do is be brave enough to say 'I'm the parent.' Take the cell phone, put it into your nightstand drawer when your kids are supposed to be having dinner with you. Know the right technologies and find that balance. They have to do well in school and social lives and in the family.

VIEIRA: Michele, half--glass half full for a second here.

Ms. BORBA: Mm-hmm.

VIEIRA: Is this possibly an opportunity for parents to connect to their kids...

Ms. BORBA: Yes.

VIEIRA: ...if they get to know this technology a little better?

Ms. BORBA: Yes. And number one is, if they're watching--the majority thing that we know that they're doing in media and plugged in is TV. Sit down with your child and start talking about what they're watching. Learn how to text so that you can connect with your child. It's getting more into their lives when they are on--doing something called the family meal, that would be your time to turn off so that you are--you're still engaged. But find those times when you can connect with your child and get back, and use their world, because this is part of their world.

VIEIRA: And as Parry pointed out, for all the newfangled technology, it really comes down to old-fashioned parenting in the end. Michele...

Ms. BORBA: Exactly, 101.

Ms. AFTAB: Absolutely.

VIEIRA: Michele Borba, thank you so much. And Parry Aftab, as always, thank you.