



*National Institute
on MEDIA
and the FAMILY®*

**Your Gift Today Tips
The Balance toward what's
good for kids.**

It's a balancing act.



Dear Friend,

Being raised online.

What do you think the implications are for kids?



I recently spoke to a group of high school students and it was discouraging. Probably two-thirds of them had their heads down, staring at phones or laptops, fingers madly clicking. Were they listening? It was hard to know, or connect, and the professors I talked to confessed they face this same situation every day.

A new study I read showed that babies who watch screens early on actually learn *fewer* vocabulary words by the time they start school. And another new study found the increased time spent in a virtual world, displacing hands-on learning, is threatening full cognitive and intellectual development in children – they are less able to make abstract and conceptual judgments.

Frequently on my drive into work, I watch elementary school-aged kids sitting on a bench at the edge of a park, heads down, fingers on their phones, not talking, not playing.

What each of these experiences, and the countless others I hear from parents and educators around the country, reveal, is that media is a powerful force in our children's lives and we as parents need to manage and guide its use. Sadly, healthy child development is rarely the primary goal of a new game, product, or technology, so it's up to us to help our children balance the amount and quality of media in their lives. When it's not in careful balance, media crowds out and affects important aspects of childhood. Like playing outside. Like developing strong bodies and healthy relationships with real people. Like learning self-discipline and perseverance, critical character traits for success in school and in life.

We're only now beginning to understand the impact on this first media-saturated generation as they roll into early adulthood. And the trends are disturbing. Kids aren't prepared for many of the challenges that face them. The media culture's non-stop messages of more, easy, fast and fun has created a mindset where hard work isn't expected or valued– and that costs them at school, and later on in jobs. Epidemic rates of childhood obesity, with increased screen time as a contributing factor, are resulting in increased healthcare costs and lower life expectancy than the previous generation.

Media, without a doubt, offers innovative, exciting opportunities for kids and youth –to learn, to connect, to express themselves and to play. While media can play a role in a child's life, it shouldn't be the dominant one. The work of the National Institute on Media and the Family is to help families, schools and communities find a balance that means success for kids.

I ask you to really consider making a gift to the National Institute on Media and the Family today. We are grateful for your past support! Your gift today helps put in place the MediaWise programs that helps grow healthy families and children.

What you do
today benefits
kids forever.



Your gift today tips the balance toward what's good .

Balancing the power of media is one of the most important issues we face as a nation. It is smack at the center of everything about our lives and our future and a failure to guide our kids to take advantage of media's opportunities, while avoiding the pitfalls, will play out in family rooms, classrooms, hospital rooms and board rooms across our country. It will cost us tremendously – socially and economically and the symptoms of media's impact will become increasingly systemic and serious.

It's never too late to become MediaWise and the best time to start is now. Becoming MediaWise starts at home, continues in daycare, preschools and on through school. Our MediaWise *t hrough-u* program trains teachers, parents and early childhood staff to use media wisely, set healthy limits and give real alternatives that benefit kids for the long-haul.

Our Switch program stresses less screens, more physical activity and healthier eating habits. Kids learn that a healthy, active life is a good and fun life. "Because of Switch, I stopped watching so much TV and I started playing with my friends more outside!" said one third-grader about her involvement in Switch.

And, there's the work we do to support parents in community. Our Say Yes to No program is spreading across the country, connecting parents to each other as they grapple together to counter-act a more, easy, fast and fun media culture.

The single most important thing that the Institute does right now is to build a community around solutions that work - powerful, 21st century parenting strategies for this media age. MediaWise parents feel empowered to offer a healthier childhood to their children.

Here's the kind of comment I hear more than almost anything else following one of my presentations, "When I heard you talk about how hard it is to say 'No' to kids now, how we as parents are fighting this *More, Easy, Fast and Fun* media culture, all I could think was, Hallelujah, I'm not alone!"

Please make a gift today. Here's what a gift of just \$45 to the Institute can do: provides a Switch kit to a child so they can learn to lead a more active and healthy life, puts MediaWise training in the hands of a childcare provider reaching dozens of children, and that same \$45 starts a community conversation about saying "No" and growing self-discipline in our kids.

What a gift that is.

Sincerely,

David Walsh, PhD
President

Make my Gift

P.S. Your gift helps ensure that media stays in healthy balance – an important part of a child's life, just not the dominant part. Thank you.