

Screen Time in Schools - Why Parents Should Care

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), today's children are spending an average of SEVEN hours per day on entertainment media, including televisions, computers, cell or “smart” phones and other electronic devices. A major contributor to this astounding amount of screen time is the one-to-one devices such as Chrome-books, laptops, virtual reality headsets, and iPads that are being given to children at younger and younger ages every year in classrooms around the country.

Is this new technology really as good for our kids as industry, schools and other promoters would have us believe? Could there be downsides to this new educational format? Should parents be asking more questions?

Parents should be asking many more questions according to experts studying the health and mental health effects of this new technology. Questions such as, why are we not limiting screen time in schools or setting safety guidelines when screen effects have been shown to impair development of the young brain, as well as lead to [addiction](#) due to dopaminergic effects? Why are we exposing children to electromagnetic radiation all day at school when there are other safer means to bring the benefits of technology and the internet to students? In fact, there is enough [significant evidence](#) of [harm](#) and poor performance with the use of technology in schools, that perhaps we should be asking, why are we allowing this technology in the classroom at all, especially for younger children?

The use of technology in schools brings with it online curricula, online assessments, student data collection and privacy issues, and industrial strength Wi-Fi which constantly emits radio frequency radiation (RFR), all bundled together for and by the industry. Who [profits](#) from this [new online connectivity](#) in the classroom? Hint, it is not our kids.

The United States Ed-Tech and Smart Classrooms Market is expected to reach [\\$93.76 billion](#) by 2020. It is promoted by the tech industry and funded in large part by the federal government. The federal 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act ([ESSA](#)), freed up over [\\$1 billion](#) per year to spend on expanding this technology in the classroom. In addition, in 2014, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted the [E-rate Modernization Order](#) which expands Wi-Fi networks in schools and libraries across America and is [funded by](#) telecommunications service providers who may pass this fee on to the consumer.

Last year, the AAP, created [new screen guidelines](#) for children and adolescents. The new recommendations put most of the onus on parents to limit and monitor screen time even though much of today's screen time happens in schools. Currently in the United States, we have MILLIONS of classrooms full of children using wireless, internet connected devices. This is due to an aggressive marketing campaign by the Ed-Tech industry whose interests, as [evidence shows](#), are in addicting children to technology

despite the well-established downsides. [What is going on](#) and what can we do about it?

On Thursday, April 20th in downtown Denver, five experts in various aspects of this new field of public health and information sharing will provide information about the downsides and dangers of these new educational formats and the mistaken assumptions about their safety, privacy, and educational value. Practical advice and action steps for parents, teachers, schools and policymakers will be presented. Anyone with responsibility for the care of children, or concerned with the adequacy and efficacy of children's education, is encouraged to attend.

Victoria Dunkley, M.D. - panelist is an Integrative Child Psychiatrist who specializes in children with complex or treatment-resistant mental health conditions. In her book, [Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time](#), she outlines how everyday use of interactive screen devices can easily [overstimulate a child's nervous system](#), triggering a variety of behavioral and mental health symptoms. She finds a strict electronic four-week fast single-handedly improves mood, focus, sleep, and behavior, regardless of the child's diagnosis, and can often also greatly reduce the need for medication.

Camilla Rees, MBA - panelist is a researcher, health educator, and expert on the biologic and health effects of RFR. She is founder of [ElectromagneticHealth.org](#), [Campaign for Radiation Free Schools](#), [Manhattan Neighbors for Safer Telecommunications](#) and co-founder of the [International EMF Alliance](#) (Oslo). She authored, *The Wireless Elephant in the Room*, co-authored *Public Health SOS: The Shadow Side of the Wireless Revolution*, and is Senior Policy Advisor to the National Institute for Science, Law and Public Policy in Washington, D.C. Camilla lectures around the world raising awareness of this issue that faces us all.

Tracy Markle, MA, LPC - panelist has worked in the field of mental health, recovery, and education for the past 25 years. Tracy and the team at [Digital Media Treatment and Education Center](#), in collaboration with [Collegiate Coaching Services](#) founded by Tracy in 2008, provide education, psychotherapy, and intervention support to clients who are 10 years old and older and their families who are impacted by the effects of technology and common co-existing factors such as, depression, isolation, academic failure, and more. Tracy also contributed to a clinician's handbook set to be published in 2017, *Internet Addiction in Children and Adolescents: Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention*.

Cheri Kiesecker -panelist is a Colorado parent and active advocate for children's privacy. She is a frequent blogger and member of many organizations, including Parent Coalition for Student Privacy. Cheri and Leonie Haimson wrote this [Washington Post article](#) explaining the many ways student data is being collected and shared.

Cindy Eckard - panelist, is a Maryland parent who has spearheaded [legislation in her state](#) that aims to create medically-sound safety guidelines for the use of digital devices in public schools. Her Op Eds have appeared in the [Baltimore Sun](#), the [Washington Post](#), and [BAM! Radio Networks' blog, EdWords](#). The public can access medical studies regarding digital device health risks, hear radio interviews, see television news interviews, watch legislative hearings and learn more about the Maryland classroom safety legislation process on her website, www.screensandkids.us

Heather Lahdenpera, LAc, MPT - moderator and co-sponsor is a passionate mom, licensed acupuncturist and Oriental Medicine practitioner, physical therapist, and educator regarding the biological health effects of RFR. She is active politically in the state of Colorado with an interest in health policies.

Christine Zipps - host and co-sponsor is a natural wellness researcher/writer and editor, certified plant-based nutritionist, independent consumer advocate and founder of Studio LUNA Press & WIRED in COLORADO.