Today’s piece was completed by Katie Hryniewicz, MD, based on a Washington Post article, Using an iPad or smart phone can harm a toddler’s learning and social skills

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/02/02/using-an-ipad-or-smartphone-can-harm-a-toddlers-brain-researchers-says/>

This article briefly summarizes a commentary published in *Pediatrics* by researchers from Boston University School of Medicine. The journalist describes a 2-year-old child mastering his father’s iPad and introduces the reader to the idea of the “App generation”, providing basic statistics on how widespread mobile device use is in young children. The journalist quotes the AAP commentary article to illustrate possible harms related to mobile device use, as well as a few possible areas in which “it is not all bad” – such as using media devices for vocabulary acquisition or to read electronic books.

The title of the article is strongly stated for the actual information presented. Overall the tone mirrors the original piece in that there are downsides and potential positive uses for these types of mobile media. However, it leaves out several key pieces including the idea that how these devices are used is just as important as the actual content (emphasizing parent-child joint interaction with media). It also does not touch on the fact that despite some of the research available, the use of mobile media has outpaced research substantially and a significant amount of research still needs to be done including at what age do children have the ability to start learning from interactive media, what tablet enhancements may facilitate learning at different ages, and more. Furthermore, the article suggests that parents be wary of mobile media without giving any solid, useable information in terms of how families can modify and adjust the mobile device use in their own homes.

**RESOURCES ON MEDIA/TECHNOLOGY IN CHILDHOOD:**

**National Association for the Education of Young Children** - Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PS_technology_WEB2.pdf>

* *When used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development.*
* *Intentional use requires early childhood teachers and administrators to have information and resources regarding the nature of these tools and the implications of their use with children.*
* *Limitations on the use of technology and media are important.*
* *Special considerations must be given to the use of technology with infants and toddlers.*
* *Attention to digital citizenship and equitable access is essential.*
* *Ongoing research and professional development are needed.*

**Center on Media & Child Health** Boston Children’s Hospital & Harvard School of Public Health

<http://www.cmch.tv/>

* *Explores issues related to effects of media on the physical, mental and social health of children.*
* *Resources for clinicians and researchers (toolkit, evidence, and discussion topics), educators and parents (tip sheets, Q&A with “mediatrician”).*
* *Excellent resources including brief, directed handouts and tip sheets for parents organized by age and developmental level.*

**Common Sense Media**

[www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)

Radesky, J., Zuckerman, B., Shchumacher, J. **Mobile and Interactive Media Use by Young Children: The Good, the Bad, and the Unknown.** *Pediatrics.* 2015; Volume 135; 1

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/1/1.full.pdf+html>

*Key Messages:*

* *New guidance is needed as mobile media differs significantly from television in its multiple modalities (videos, games, and educational apps) and interactive capabilities, but much more research is needed on this topic.*
* *Mobile devices may be beneficial in distraction during distressing procedures such as anesthesia induction or minor surgery, however increasing use with daily routines such as car rides, errands or eating out which could be detrimental to learning self-regulation.*
* *Instant accessibility and portability increased likelihood of displacing human interactions that promote development of empathy, social skills and problem solving, as well as decreasing sensorimotor activity that supports the development of visual-motor skills needed for math and science success.*
* *Parents’ use of interactive media themselves may further displace parent-child interaction.*
* *HOW we use technology and the interaction during media use with parents and educators may play the biggest role – could be useful for modeling teaching strategies for low-literacy parents, promoting joint engagement, etc.*
* *Clinicians should take advantage of teachable moments in clinic, ask questions about how parents decide on appropriate technology, recommend age appropriate educational content and use of resources, and guidance on preserving quality family interaction and “unplugged time”.*
* *Parents should be advised to try a game or app first, play it interactively with the child and ask questions about their learning.*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!