

# Childhood Rewired: The Impact of Social Media & Screen Culture on Developing Minds

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## Action Guide for Educators

### Key Points to Remember

#### 1. Understanding Screen Culture's Impact:

- *Vulnerabilities*: Special education students are more susceptible to behavioral issues and mental health impacts from over use of screens.
- *Attention Economy*: Platforms are designed to capture attention, often prioritizing engagement over well-being.
- *Passive vs. Interactive Tech*: Prioritize technology that involves active engagement rather than passive consumption.

#### 2. Toolbox vs. Trap:

- *Toolbox*: Tech can be a powerful tool for individualized learning and skill-building.
- *Trap*: Overuse of non-interactive screen time can reduce physical activity, social interaction, and negatively impact ability to focus.

### Action Steps for Educators

#### 1. Incorporate Tech Mindfully:

- *Define Clear Goals*: Use screen-based tools only when they enhance learning outcomes and align with educational goals.
- *Create Screen-Free Zones*: Establish spaces and times (e.g., during meals or specific activities) where students engage without screens.

#### 2. Encourage Positive Social Interactions:

- *Plan Group Activities*: Use tech that promotes teamwork, like group quizzes on Kahoot, and balance with tech-free social games.
- *Teach Peer-to-Peer Skills*: Use structured exercises to develop empathy and communication, such as turn-taking games.

#### 3. Implement the R.E.A.C.H. Model ([www.everyschool.org](http://www.everyschool.org))

- Remove weak tech
- Embrace powerful tech for learning
- Accept the digital dilemma
- Create a tech plan
- Honor human connection

#### 4. Engage Parents in Discussions about Digital Well Being:

- *Set Clear Boundaries:* Suggest parents set tech-free zones at home and limit screen time outside of school.
- *Educate on Social Media:* Recommend delaying social media access until high school, aligning with expert guidelines for maturity.

#### 5. Model Balanced Tech Use:

- *Review your own use:* model balanced screen use, showing students the value of tech-free interactions.
- *Use device settings:* Track your own time spent, app usage, pick ups, notifications.

### Resources

#### 1. Tools for Digital Well Being Assessment:

- iPhone: [Screen Time Settings on iOS](#)
- Android: [Digital Wellbeing Settings](#)

#### 2. Research & Helpful Orgs:

- [Center for Humane Technology](#) – Insights on digital well-being and recommendations for balanced tech use.
- [Common Sense Media](#) – Guides and lesson plans for digital literacy and responsible tech use in classrooms.
- [Let Grow](#) – Resources to encourage independence and resilience in children, fostering growth beyond screens.
- The Anxious Generation – research and strategies for rolling back the phone-based childhood and creating new norms.

#### 3. Videos for Awareness and Reflection:

- [The Social Dilemma](#): A documentary highlighting the psychological effects of social media platforms.
- [What Makes a Good Life?](#) by Robert Waldinger – Emphasizes the role of relationships across the lifespan.

#### 4. Further Reading:

- [The False Promise of Device-Based Education](#)
- [The Anxious Generation](#) by Jonathan Haidt
- [Hunt, Gather, Parent](#) by Michaeleen Doucleff
- [Never Enough](#) by Jennifer Breheny Wallace