

Learning About the Uses and Benefits of Technology

Children today have many opportunities to interact with technology for entertainment value and learning. Most often we think of children using computer technology, including handheld devices loaded with games, books, music and movies. In moderation, these devices can aid in children's learning and development.

Within our academic curriculum, we involve children in activities and reflection on ways that technology can improve our understanding of the world around us, help us do our jobs, and make the world a better place. We help children see how the understanding of science and math moves technology forward, and that someday they too might create new and improved ways to do things.

Below are a few ways that we integrate technology in our classrooms and some ideas to try at home.



INTERMEDIATES

In the classroom: Beginning in our Intermediate program, students learn common technology vocabulary, such as mouse, keyboard and email. Students also explore the double meaning of verbs that describe online and offline activities, such as "tapping" and "surfing".

At home: *Dot*. by Randi Zuckerberg is a great book to read with your child to continue the learning at home. *Dot*, the main character, is a tech savvy little girl who leaves her electronic devices at home while she taps, swipes and shares in the real world.

PRE-K

In the classroom: Teachers encourage our older preschoolers to use technology as a tool to express themselves. For example, students use a camera to take photos of seasonal changes outdoors and write what they observed in their journal. This activity promotes creativity and provides a fun opportunity to practice writing skills.

At home: Allow your child to explore his world using digital photography tools. Ask him to describe his photos and explain why he chose those objects or locations to photograph. Encourage him to use descriptive language and emotion vocabulary.

In summary, we provide numerous opportunities for children to explore technology in our classrooms. Through these activities, children become excited to use technology educationally, and are better prepared to use technology in elementary school and beyond.

- Lauren Starnes, PhD- Director of Early Childhood Education