



“The more time you spend in front of a screen—despite the fact that it’s educational—the less time you spend playing outside or doing something of a physical nature and interacting with other individuals—peers, siblings or adults.”

But here’s the startling reality. According to research by the Kaiser Family Foundation: Two-thirds of infants and toddlers watch a screen an average of two hours a day. Kids under age six watch an average of about two hours of screen media a day. For kids and teens ages eight to 18 years old, the average is close to seven and a half hours a day.

But does that extra screen time really hurt kids? It could. According to the Mayo Clinic, too much screen time has been linked to:

- **Obesity:** Children who watch more than two hours of TV a day are more likely to be overweight.
- **Irregular sleep:** The more TV kids watch, the more likely they are to resist going to bed and to have trouble falling asleep.
- **Behavior problems:** Elementary students who spend more than two hours a day watching TV or using a com-

puter are more likely to have emotional, social and attention problems. Exposure to video games also increases the risks of attention problems and bullying in children.

- **Impaired academic performance:** Elementary students who have TVs in their bedrooms tend to perform worse on tests than those who don’t.
- **Violence:** Too much exposure to violence on TV and in movies, music videos and video and computer games can desensitize children to violence. As a result, children may learn to accept violent behavior as a normal part of life and a way to solve problems.
- **Less time for play:** Excessive screen time leaves less time for active, creative play.

In addition, some argue that increased use of smart phones and social media as communication

Screens’ glow brighten students’ future

When the Fort Payne, Alabama, Kiwanis Club donated 10 iPads to the Fort Payne High School this past year, it wasn’t the first time it had put tech tools in classrooms. A few years earlier, the club helped the school system place “Smart Boards” in the school.

“We’d seen firsthand how this had an impact on both the educators and the students,” says 2011–12 club President David Gwarjanski. “The investment of technology resulted in more engaged students and interactive classrooms.”

So, when Fort Payne High School announced its initiative to put an iPad in the hand of each teacher and student, the Kiwanis club was first in line to help.

“The Fort Payne Kiwanis Club wanted to be a significant part of the progress of our schools,” Gwarjanski says, “and this was an initiative our school leaders strongly supported. The iPads made sense to us in that it would allow a rural Alabama school system to enable the young people in this area to stay current with technology and better prepare for the future.”