

MARTHA CURRIE WELLNESS

MARTHA CURRIE ELEMENTARY'S HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Technology "Dyskenict"

I had the opportunity to get away on two trips this past summer, with no access to my email, and limited access to the internet (for over three weeks). It was very eye opening as to how much extra time I had for my family, and for myself, when there are no computers or technology around to distract me.

The word *dyskenict* comes from an amazing documentary that speaks to the impact that technology has on human interactions. These tools have been created to help us facilitate interaction. But we need to understand how they are re-acting back on us; how they are shaping us, as much as we are shaping them.



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MindUp program by Goldie Hawn

Many of you may know of the *MindUP* program (created by Goldie Hawn) which we use at Martha Currie. It focuses on creating more empathy and compassion within relationships, bringing well-being of children to support them to learn about “mindfulness.” Mindful awareness is about being able to engage all of our senses. To taste the food we eat, to sense the air we breathe, to listen with attention, to see with fresh and inquiring eyes, to pause and appreciate the wonder of a butterfly your child has discovered on the sidewalk before rushing off to school. Learning to value even the most commonplace activities-and finding the teachable moments in each of them – has the potential to make the ordinary quite extraordinary.

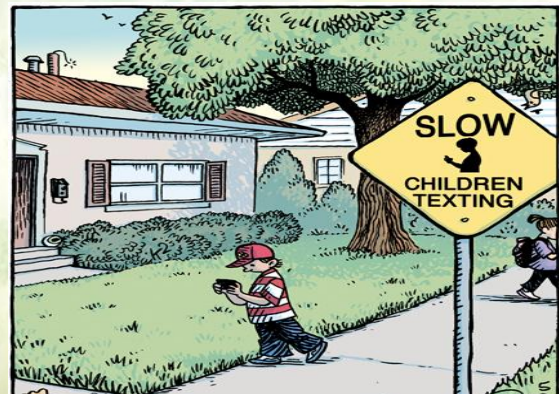
As Goldie says, “we parents are here to guide, love and nurture our children’s emotional development so that they can set sail on their own adventure to happy, healthy, and productive lives.”



To be a good pilot is a daunting task in today’s frenzied world. It requires focus, attention and commitment. This is hard when often both parents are working full time to make ends meet, technology is robbing the intimacy from family life, and so many other stresses than we ever imagined possible. And yet, there can be no job or commitment more important than the emotional imprint we make on the babies we’ve bought into this world.”

Think back to about 10 to 15 years ago when we all did not have cell phones, email, texting, computers and internet at our fingertips. Let’s start with our morning routine: We used to wake up with our alarm clock; take a shower;; make breakfast, get in the car and drive to work. Now, we reach over to the night stand, grab our phone which is there in case we want to check our email in the middle of the night. We quickly check our email, texts and then go on the computer to check Facebook.

We have so many more things to do in the morning and it is all because we are constantly connected to technology.



Connection to Technology

In the documentary *Dyskenict*, it talks about how our devices, ringing, chirping and vibrating 24/7, are serving to degrade our day-to-day conscious-thought process, like static on a radio station. Studies have shown that kids have become overly focused on the immediate, context-dependent implications of a situation, as opposed to the long-term moral and emotional implications of a situation. There is alarming evidence in several studies showing a link between the amount of texting and ones ability to show and be empathetic.

The documentary "Dyskenict" speaks to the topics: sexting, online bullying, gaming, online pornography and much more. This is something that we never had to deal with as children and something that we need to talk to and educate our children about. With a stroke of a key our children can be assaulted with images that are not appropriate for their developmental level. It is said that almost EVERY exposure to online porno for the first time happens while doing homework.



Goldie also talks about technology and how it is challenging our ability to focus. The "single biggest chunk of waking life of the American child" is spent in front of a television or video screen according to the American Medical Association with the TV being on for close to 7 hours a day. We Canadians are not too far behind.

For young brains especially, this mental restlessness can have an enormously negative impact. She writes, "for today's "screenagers," these flickering images are like bright diversions in the digital candy store. The need for them can become compulsive and often addictive.

We have all become subject to a sense of urgency in which everything needs to be dealt with immediately." This constant onslaught of unfiltered information can be damaging to our minds. Numerous studies have found that working memory is impaired, performance suffers, and the brain tires more easily as a result of being overwhelmed by relentless stimuli.

We need to find time to turn off our devices and be with our family, friends or ourselves. Take time to think things over (10 mindful minutes) each day can change the direction in which society is moving today by strengthening the minds of the next generation. We need to learn to interact with technology in a more optimal way that does not detract us from being **most human**. Our ability to talk to each other, pay attention to one thing, and still take advantage of the abilities our computers and whole interconnected network has to offer us.

Books to Check Out:

10 Mindful Minutes by Goldie Hawn
Hold Onto Your Kids by **Gabor Mate**, Gordon Neufeld
Simplicity Parenting by Kim John Payne with Lisa M. Ross
The Conscious Parent by Shefali Tsabary
Hands Free Mama by Rachel Macy Stafford

Movies (documentary) to Watch:

Dyskenict: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrSDbRKFhrM>