

Digitizing Conference Abstract.
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iPad apps for Toddlers: How can we know which ones are good?

The year, 2017, marks ten years since the iPhone was introduced and since then has come the iPad and other variations of tablet-based devices. The increased use of these devices has permeated all areas of modern life including the entertainment and education of young children. The developers of applications (apps) for these devices have also targeted the early years with educational and entertainment apps being explicitly designed and marketed for use with young children.

As the use of these digital technologies has increased, there have been concerns raised about the amount of time children - particularly those under 3, are spending interacting with these devices. Currently, research is being conducted into the effects of the use of these devices. Much of this research is embedded in the tenet that a balanced approach is the best approach. Specifically it advocates the need for a balance between 'screen time' and 'green time' – time for young children to be outside playing and engaging with the natural world.

The use of iPads and their associated apps have become common place in early years' settings. This increased use has highlighted the need for critical evaluation, particularly with the plethora of apps now available. So, how can educators judge the quality of apps and manage the time young children spend with these devices?

This presentation will outline some of the frameworks that have been developed to assist in the evaluation of apps created for tablet-based devices. This examination will include reviews of a number of apps, specifically designed for toddlers that have utilized these frameworks. The aim of the presentation is to provide key indicators of quality that can be used by educators in making decisions about the selection of appropriate apps for use with young children. It is hoped that this information may also provide the basis of notices or newsletters that could be distributed to parents to help them in navigating the maze of app selection for young children outside of the educative environment.