

Pointers For Parents

Kids And Technology: Diversion Or Addiction?

(NAPSA)—With kids 8 to 18 spending 44.5 hours per week using electronic media (KFF.org), parents are increasingly concerned that screen time is robbing children of real-world experiences.

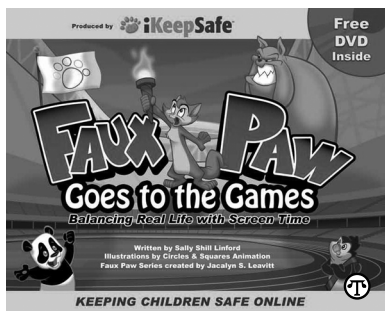
A recent study by Harris Interactive indicates that nearly 23 percent of youths report that they feel “addicted to video games.” But, there is good news for parents and educators: New resources are being developed to help parents teach kids to keep a healthy balance between screen time and real life.

A quick, online test will help parents assess their child’s dependence on the computer. The Parent-Child Internet Addiction test (available at www.iKeepSafe.org/TEST) was developed by Dr. Kimberly Young, executive director of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery; it consists of 20 questions about a child’s behavior, emotional makeup and outside interests.

Parents who feel that their child scores too high on the assessment may want to have a conversation about the cost of excessive gaming and Internet safety in general.

To help make these conversations easier, the nonprofit Internet Keep Safe Coalition (www.iKeepSafe.org) has created a series of children’s books and animated films that tell the adventures of Internet safety mascot, Faux Paw the Techno Cat.

The latest book, “Faux Paw Goes to the Games,” uses the backdrop of the Olympics to help



A new children’s book and animated film help children understand the importance of balancing real life with computer time.

kids learn what can happen when online games interfere with real-life goals. The book draws on Olympic ideals to teach the value of maintaining balance.

Dr. Young recommends the book, saying, “Faux Paw’s new adventure is a wonderful guide to help parents talk with their children about computer use and the importance of balancing Internet time with real life.”

iKeepSafe also provides free online tutorials for parents on cyberbullying, social networking, how to report abuse and other current Internet safety issues.

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition is a partnership of governors, first spouses, attorneys general, public health and education professionals, law enforcement and industry leaders, working together for the health and safety of youth online. For more information, go to www.iKeepsafe.org.