

Pointers For Parents

Tips For Parents To “Logon” To Child’s Technology Skills

(NAPSA)—There are a lot of techno buzz phrases these days, such as instant messaging, digital photography, online gaming and many more. The good news for non-tech savvy parents is that they can still play an active role in developing their children’s technical skills.

Technical fluency has become a significant part of determining success in the workplace, where a reported 60 percent of the jobs available today require technology skills. However, technology is not widely integrated into classroom lesson plans. According to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, 99 percent of full-time public school teachers reported they had access to computers and the Internet somewhere in their school, yet only 33 percent reported feeling well prepared to use computers in their curriculum to improve student learning.

Shelley Goldman, Associate Professor at Stanford University’s School of Education, provides tips and questions for parents who want to better understand if technology is being used to enhance their child’s learning process.

Below are four questions (and the optimum answers) that mom and dad can ask to better understand if technology is being used effectively in their child’s classroom.

1. Where are the school’s computers located and are they connected to the Internet? Computers belong in the classroom where students can access this powerful tool whenever they need it, like a dictionary or a textbook. The Internet is a window to the world,



Parents may be able to do more than they realize to help their children learn with computers.

allowing access to information and communication.

2. Who uses computers? Computers are powerful tools for teachers and students. For example, teachers can use them to research, create exciting lesson plans, communicate with parents and colleagues, maintain students’ grades and take online professional development courses, which provide models, simulations, and databases of information. Students can use them to conduct research, create and test models, run simulations and organize information in new ways, analyze information, make unique presentations and communicate with teachers and parents.

3. How are computers used? Computers should be used to develop critical thinking skills, not just for rote “drill and practice” or as a reward to play games.

4. Have teachers been trained on how to incorporate technology

into their lesson plans? In the hands of a skilled teacher, computers and the Internet can be a significant learning tool in the classroom. Teacher training such as Intel® Teach to the Future, a free professional development program on effective use of technology, helps teachers to incorporate hands-on use of the Internet, Web page design and multimedia software into their lesson plans. For more information, visit www.intel.com/education.

If you would like to supplement your child’s learning process through the use of technology, there are several things you can do. Remember, you do not have to be a computer expert to help in important ways. For example, you could assist a teacher during class, help with fund-raising efforts or even help set up equipment in classrooms.

If your child is using the Internet at school or would like to use it at home for a project, you can help your child learn to critically evaluate the information on Web sites. Discuss answers to questions such as these: Is the source credible? Does the information actually help you address the question you are asking?

Beyond seeking information, you should also discuss your guidelines for using the Internet. Are there time limits? Is chatting with friends using e-mail or instant messaging permissible? Are there certain activities or Web sites that are off-limits?

Applying these tips and asking these questions may help your child to use technology more effectively as a learning tool.