

Should I let my baby surf the Internet?

Five minutes ago, this post read as follows: “dasdaba \$%+1 p00p.” I’m still not entirely sure what that means, but I assume M does, since she decided to type it while I was away from my computer grabbing her a new diaper. At 12 months old she is fascinated with technology. I’ve tried giving her baby laptops, but she knows the difference and stacks them in her crib to use as step stools. She knows how to flip through my Netflix queue on our PS3 and how to go from the home screen to the messaging screen on my phone, which has led to a number of strange messages and apologetic responses. The common position is babies should not be exposed to technology until after they turn two, but is that realistic?

According to a new study by [Common Sense Media](#), 4 out of 10 children under the age of two use mobile devices. By the age of eight, that number nearly doubles to 7 in 10. Clearly, technology is a large part of our lives and completely removing technology would mean becoming different people. The often cited recommendation by [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) does recommend limiting "passive screen time" for children under the age of two. Passive screen time, essentially, is plopping your infant in front of the TV in place of interaction with a human being. I think most all of us can agree that is probably not wise. However, according to [NPR](#) the recommendation isn't intended to say that all technology is inherently bad – on the contrary, studies have found that children who talk with grandparents or distant family members through Facetime or Skype actually learned a considerable amount. In the end, it comes down to whether the interaction with technology is passive or active and how much time is being spent in front of a screen. A few minutes here and there is probably okay, but six hours a day watching cartoons is probably a bad choice.

M is pulling on my shirt with one hand and grabbing my mouse with the other. I pull her on my lap and read her this post, pointing out the words as I go. She giggles and slams her hands on the keyboard, typing "jdbhf9u" in the process. I assume that means she approves.