

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Technology: A Winning Combination

Welcome to the Science of Parenting a podcast dedicated to sharing scientific information with parents. I am Lori Hayungs, Human Sciences Specialist in Family Life for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Everywhere we look, we see people, adults and kids alike, carrying a phone, pad or tablet of some kind. Prior to the smart phone, most everyone was eager to get some type of computer. The computers began as big and bulky and overtime have become both more portable and manageable. We have these technology devices because they are our direct connection to a variety of things, including the internet; the weather; the telephone; and instant messaging with family and friends.

As parents, just because technology is available, you have the final say in what and how much technology comes into your home. Students graduating today, need 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including problem solving; communication; collaboration; creativity; innovation along with math, science; history; art and a healthy dose of social skills. According to New Mexico State University Faculty members Barbara Chamberlain and Jesus H. Trespalacios, “an increasing body of evidence suggests video games are powerful ways to give students these skills”.

Today’s youth, have probably spent many hours in front of a screen playing hours of video games. Over time, these games have been great babysitters and today, may be the reason your child is able to think more critically, problem solve more intuitively and use both sides of their brain.

According to the National Education Association, in order for today’s students to compete globally, they must have a skill set including the ability to: communicate; create; collaborate and think critically. The gaming systems that Dr. Chamberlain is developing at New Mexico State is helping to assure parents that in addition to having fun playing the games, children are indeed learning to use critical thinking, combined with math and science concepts. The technology we have access to has the potential to help us; if we are disciplined enough to know when to use it and when to put it down, and interact with the people around us. As they say, everything in moderation, and that includes technology too!

This month the Science of Parenting Bloggers will discuss how technology is our friend; how to support the positive use of social media with our family members; and how to set boundaries for a healthy balance of technology and face to face social interaction. As always, we would enjoy hearing from you about ways you support your children and their quest for technology.