

Technology Education for our Youth

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I have many parents ask me if computers are really necessary at such a young age. My answer to their questions is YES! Introducing children to computers at a young age is very beneficial. With the increasing importance of technology in education and the workplace in America, the ability to effectively use a computer has become as fundamental to a person's academic and occupational success as reading, writing and math. A wealth of research suggests that technology, *when used appropriately*, can enhance how a child learns. Technology offers the child opportunities for active engagement in the learning process, cooperative learning, frequent interaction and feedback, and a sense of connection to real-world contexts and applications.

In one study conducted at Fairfield University, children between the ages of two and five were provided daily access to computers and supervision from classroom teachers. In addition, one group also received weekly computer training from an undergraduate technology trainer. Results show that all of the children were better prepared to read and learn, but the children who had been given the additional weekly computer training were even further ahead. Overall, all children in the technology training program improved their kindergarten readiness skills (language arts, math, creative arts). They also had better computer skills and more confidence in using the technology. Teachers and technology trainers found that the children had improved their basic academic skills, interest in learning, attention span and concentration, hand-eye coordination, self-esteem, independence, cooperation, and memory skills. For children receiving the additional weekly training, the results were significantly greater in all areas.

There were other unanticipated benefits as well. The focus group data suggested that parents and teachers were surprised at how quickly the children learned to use the computer and how much they enjoyed it. The adults saw the children in a new light, as more competent and intelligent. This increased respect can have a far-reaching effect on the children's self-esteem and achievement. Parents also became interested in learning how to use computers themselves!

Here at Reed City Area Public Schools, we strive to provide your child with the experience necessary to compete in our technology-driven world.