

Childhood Unplugged: Practical Advice to Get Kids Off Screens and Find Balance

Katherine Johnson Martinko

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Katherine Johnson Martinko's insightful book *Childhood Unplugged* suggests means of transitioning families into screen-free lifestyles.

Drawing on her own parenting style, advice from experts in the field, and the wisdom of other screen-free parents, Martinko encourages her fellow parents to "begin as you mean to go on." With advice on removing televisions from bedrooms and limiting screen time or tablet usage to a couple of hours per week, this is a helpful guide for parents who hope to curb their family's electronic habits.

Martinko delivers cultural observations, as of a furniture salesperson who couldn't understand why she didn't want to purchase an entertainment center to go with her sofa. Her experiences raising her sons without screens are impactful counterexamples to this culture. She remarks that though she lives in a noisy home with three boys, their lives are happier and more simple without the use of screens.

Throughout the book, Martinko ably explores the potential dangers and psychological harm of allowing endless hours of television time and social media access. Her recommendations are divvied up based on children's ages, following the assertion that children under the age of two should not be subjected to screens at all. Instead, the book recommends taking babies and toddlers outside, following the examples of Swedish parents who allow their babies outdoor naps, even in cold temperatures. And for teenagers, Martinko refers to an interview with a mother who expects her sons to be outside playing in the yard after school every day before sitting down to finish their homework.

Childhood Unplugged is a self-help book for parents who want to take charge of their children's digital diets.

ERIN NESBIT (July / August 2023)

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