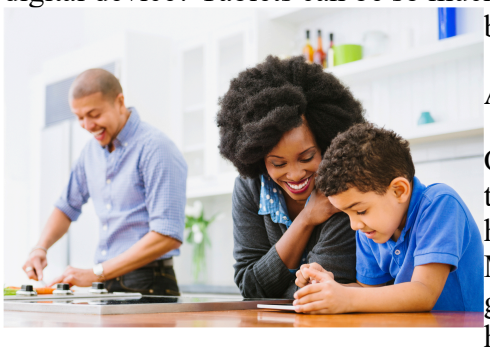
Tablets: the new digital chalkboard

Is your child pestering you for a tablet? Are you wondering if it's worth the cost? Do you really want *another* digital device? Tablets can be so much more than a means by which to watch videos or play games. They can be powerful learning tools for kids of all ages.



A learning tool for the very young

Often toddlers can operate a tablet with ease; all they have to do is touch the screen! Many different tablets are now on the market that have been designed and manufactured specifically for young children. Most are brightly coloured, durable, easy to use, and pre-loaded with games, paint tools, cameras, and kid-friendly app stores. They can also have built-in parental controls that make it easy to manage what your child can access.

Tablets are small, light, portable, and often have brilliant screen resolution, making them a fun "toy" for the very young – and a parent's salvation on long car trips. Playing with toys is how children learn and educators quickly recognized the enormous educational potential of tablets. Over the past few years, they have worked with software developers to create dozens of educational activities and games to let very young children learn and practice:

- fine motor skills
- hand-eye coordination
- spatial awareness
- reading
- writing
- numeracy
- visual thinking
- problem solving
- letter, number, shape and colour recognition
- basic computer skills
- and much more

For school-age children, there are a multitude of applications that let them discover music, art, the earth, the stars, and history. Whatever they're interested in, there's an app for it! Apps can take a child's imagination and creativity as far as it wants to go.

How to use a tablet as a teaching tool for your children

Many schools and universities have begun using tablets as teaching tools. Students can conduct research, write essays, take pictures and videos, create presentations and spreadsheets and download books then send, receive, and share information with classmates and teachers – from anywhere, at any time, with a device no bigger than a notebook.

Here are some ways you can use a tablet to teach your children:

- **Read together on your tablet.**
  A tablet is a great way to read to your kids while introducing them to technology. They can save you time and money by allowing immediate downloading of e-books for your child. Many libraries offer free downloading of ebooks in their collection.
- **Encourage creativity.**
  Tablets allow children to explore their interests, whether that's drawing, writing, playing music, or exploring the world. Whatever their passion – there's an app to fire their imagination.
- **Adjust the learning to your child.**
  How does your child learn? Does he or she prefer to figure things out on his or her own? Does he or she like to listen to stories? Is he or she a visual learner? Psychologically, children do better when they

are offered choices. They feel a sense of empowerment when they are given autonomy over their own learning. For example, if a child is having difficulties learning multiplication, there are many different games that can help. If one doesn't help, he or she can try another. With the variety of games and activities on the market, you'll soon discover how your child likes to learn.

- **Learn with your child.**
  Be involved in what he or she is interested in. Don't just download appropriate apps for your child – play with him or her on the tablet. Learn how to play piano or how the heart works, take an interactive journey to the moon, make a movie or write a story – the possibilities are endless.