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## **The Dangers of Restraining Children with Technology and Drugs - What Lies Ahead is Not a Pretty Picture**

Children playing...running, jumping, skipping. What a lovely image! Sounds of laughter, babies cooing, squeals of delight. As we move forward into our new world of high speed technology, these images and sounds become a distant memory, a vision in our past. Children don't play outside in the park or in backyard anymore, it's not safe, that was yesterday. Today's child is inside, plugged into the latest form of technology. Sexualized and violent images flooding their wee little minds; vivid images that soon become our children's reality, virtual images that unfortunately become our children's identity. And then we wonder why our children are hyperactive, anxious and have trouble sleeping at night. We complain to our friends that our children have become so aggressive, yet fear any new experience. "No worries though" we keep telling ourselves, because in the age of modern medicine, doctors can just give children a new age diagnosis and pop them a pill! Then our children, and our busy lives, become manageable. Then we can send our children back to their babysitter - TV and videogames. Now they're quiet, now we can make dinner, get on the internet, get rid of some of those endless emails. Eyes glazed, energy flat, spirit dead, our children now fit into the crazy hectic life we've created for ourselves. When exactly did we become a society that thinks it's OK to restrain our children with technology and drugs? At what point did we as parents of little children say to ourselves that it's not a bad thing for them to sit in front of 6.5 hours per day of TV and videogames, and that it's not a bad thing to strap our infants in front of Baby Einstein for 2.2 hours per day? When did we, as well meaning parents decide that if our children can't handle being restrained by technology, that it's OK to give 2-4 year olds Ritalin? When did this happen? When did we decide that it's abnormal for children to move?

The three critical factors for normal child development are not being met in today's 'techno' based world. Children need to touch, move and connect with other human



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beings in order to be physically and mentally healthy, a lot, up to four hours per day. When children don't get enough movement, touch and connection, we see developmental delays, attachment disorders and a host of behavioral problems the education and medical systems are only beginning to detect, much less understand. Parents and teachers everywhere, are struggling to cope with child energy that is all over the map, from hyper and charged to zoned out and lethargic. The results of uncontrolled technology use are becoming an increasing problem in homes and school across the globe. The childhood 'diagnosis and drug mania' that is sweeping across North America, is unprecedented and profound. ADHD, ADD, Autism, Anxiety Disorders, Attachment Disorders, Bi-polar Disorder, Depression (and we're only at the 'D's') are but a few of the rising incidence of diagnoses assigned to North American children. Procedures for assessing and diagnosing these children are exhaustive, completely overwhelming the education and health care systems, often resulting in medication as a first line of treatment. Psychotropic (mind altering) medications are now being prescribed to 15% of elementary children. Ritalin use is so prevalent, one Canadian elementary teacher reports 7 of her 24 students are now 'popping' this pill. What parents and teachers often don't know is that these drugs have not been tested for use with children, and reviews of existing studies, show these drugs often have no therapeutic effect. It's anyone's guess as to what will happen to the children who use these drugs long term. Addiction, neurotoxicity (death of neurons), and altered neurochemistry (having to take more to achieve the same results) are all unknown factors for children taking psychotropic medications.

Cris Rowan and Kathleen Morris are two pediatric therapists who have made it their mission to bring this crucial information forward to the general public through providing child development workshops. Cris Rowan, founder of Rowan Training Systems reports that "Technology is here to stay, but it is addictive. We therefore need to bring together researchers and government to develop regulations that restrict technology use to protect our most vulnerable, our children." Rowan encourages parents and teachers to come on



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board to assist with the formation of child development Foundation Teams, to begin to formulate 'unplug – don't drug' initiatives.

Media can visit Cris Rowan's websites [www.rowantrainingsystems](http://www.rowantrainingsystems) and [www.zonein.ca](http://www.zonein.ca) which have a media kit, research section and a number of published articles on the impact of technology on child development. Cris has performed over 200 parent and teacher workshops, and is presently doing a lecture series at Simon Fraser University. Cris is finishing a book titled *A Cracked Foundation: Repairing the Damage of Technology on Child Development* and can be contacted for an interview on her cell 604-740-2264.

Cris Rowan, BScOT, BScBi

CEO Rowan Training Systems and Zone'in Programs Inc

6840 Seaview Rd.

Sechelt, BC V0N3A4

604-885-0986, 604-885-0389 fax, 604-740-2264 cell

[crowan@zonein.ca](mailto:crowan@zonein.ca)