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Education is evolving all the time. Be sure to stay on top of changes so your children get a leg up on learning.

As technology evolves, so do the ways children learn... in and out of the classroom.

With constantly changing tools and trends, teachers can do more to stay up-to-date to help children thrive. It is important that parents understand what these changes mean so their children can maintain a competitive edge.

Here are some new trends in education that every parent should know about:

- **More collaboration:** If you think Facebook is all gossip and games, think again. Many teachers are drawing upon social media's natural collaborative element and ability to connect the classroom and home.

In fact, some innovative teachers are using sites like Pinterest, Skype, Facebook and Twitter in a controlled, supervised way to make classroom materials more accessible and encourage conversation.

• **Learning from each other:** Since technology can change so rapidly, it's important that teachers share best practices by word of mouth. The newest social platform, Edmodo, built the first whole network of K-12 users and connects teachers with other teachers as well as parents, students and third-parties.

Edmodo members can swap ideas, share lesson plans and manage grades in a secure network accessible from school computers. With more than eight million users across 60,000 different schools, the possibilities are endless.

• **New tools:** New technologies, such as tablets and e-readers, are helping students learn. These smaller devices offer students advantages over traditional computers, through interactive capabilities that bring lessons to life and enhanced images, video and audio. Tablets also have practical advantages such as "instant on," all-day battery life, no cords and are often more cost-effective than ordering new text books each year.

• **Adding more fun:** According to Open College, teachers who integrated digital games into lessons saw an increase in average test scores when compared to traditional, non-digital games. By making learning fun, you can get kids excited to learn just about anything and get some laughs along the way.

□•□ **Turn it off:** In this digital era, it is also important to make sure students have the time to unplug. Not only does time outside offer children opportunities to get necessary exercise, but a 2009 Yeshiva University study found that children who have more recess time behave better in the classroom and are likelier to learn more.

—*StatePoint*