



Turn off that Screen!

Tips & Information

Real-life challenges... ..and how to overcome them

- Movies are an easy way to kill time on rainy or cold days.
 - ⇒ Try new indoor activities like freeze dance, an obstacle course, or an arts & crafts project. For even more ideas, look below and check out the resources on the next page.
- Kids love watching TV and playing computer games.
 - ⇒ Remove TVs or cover them with a cloth. Use the parent settings on computers to set time limits.
- TV time and computer games are some of the only activities that all children enjoy.
 - ⇒ Use physically active video games like “Dance Dance Revolution” or other fitness games.
- If we don’t let kids watch TV, we have no downtime for lesson planning.
 - ⇒ Schedule planning time outside of program hours. Time during the program can then be all about the kids.



What you can do to replace “Screen Time” activities

- * Let kids suggest their favorite activities! Ask them to fill in the blank, “Instead of watching TV, I could _____.” Try a new idea each week.
- * Substitute free reading time for TV. Letting children bring in appropriate magazines or books from home can be a fun reward. You could also offer appropriate reading materials or take the youth for a walk to their local library.
- * Plan creative arts & crafts projects. Kids can make their own placemats and decorate water bottles. Go to www.crayola.com for coloring pages, craft ideas, and games.
- * Set up a scavenger hunt either inside or outside where children can search for common objects on site.
- * Play music! Kids can help think of songs to download, make up dances on their own, or play freeze dance as a group.
- * Involve children in snack preparation by helping with set up and clean up, snack assembly and recipe prep– just make sure everyone washes their hands first!
- * Bring back board games!

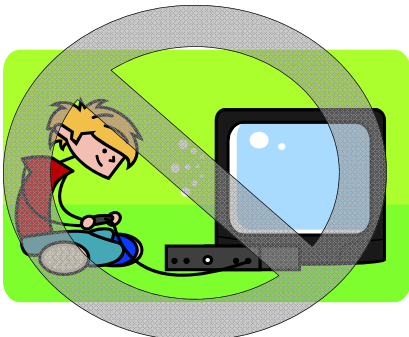


Did you know?

What's the problem with TV?

- Kids who often watch more than 4 hours of TV per day are more likely to be overweight.
- TV is more than just shows! There is a ton of advertising, especially for junk food.
- Kids who watch violence on TV are more likely to act aggressively. They also tend to think that the world is scary and that something bad will happen to them.
- TV characters often do risky things like smoking and drinking. Many TV shows also stereotype boys and girls and different races.

(American Academy of Pediatrics)



- ★ The first 2 years of life are an important time for brain development. TV can keep kids from exploring, playing, and talking with other people. All these things help kids have healthy physical and social development.
- ★ As kids get older, too much screen time can get in the way of other important activities. Instead of watching TV, kids could be exercising, reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family.
- ★ The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says that kids under 2 years old shouldn't watch *any* TV. Kids 2 years and older shouldn't watch more than 1 to 2 hours a day of TV. Any TV that kids watch should be educational and age-appropriate.
- ★ Kids under age 7 typically spend **triple** the amount of time in front of screens than reading or being read to.
- ★ Two out of three of kids ages 0 to 6 live in homes where the TV is on at least half of the time, even if no one is watching it. (Kaiser)

Want to know more? Check out these other resources.

Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition (We Can!) provides families and communities with helpful resources to reduce screen time and stay healthy:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/live-it/screen-time.htm>

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day. They also offer a Smart Guide to Kids' TV:

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;107/2/423.pdf>

<http://www.aap.org/family/smarttv.htm>

TV Turn-Off Network is dedicated to promoting alternative forms of entertainment for children and adults. For information and ideas visit:

<http://www.screentime.org>

The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media created KidsHealth to provide information that families can understand and use. This page discusses how TV affects kids:

http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/tv_affects_child.html

These resources can help empower kids to understand how media and advertising target them:

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm>

<http://www.frankwbaker.com/advertising2.htm>



Contact us: Harvard Prevention Research Center, 401 Park Drive, 4th Floor West Boston, MA 02215, (617) 384-8916