

Dear Families,

How much time do your children spend each day or week passively sitting in front of one kind of screen or another instead of actively playing or exercising?

Several studies have linked excessive screen time to childhood obesity and lowered literacy rates for children of all ages. Scientists have also found language delays among children younger than age 2 who are exposed to too much screen time.

Set boundaries for television and other media use. Avoid screen media for infants or toddlers younger than age 2, and limit the amount of time older children watch or use media. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children preschool-age and older should have no more than two hours of total screen time per day. Remember that computer time factors into a child's overall screen time for a day.

Tip: Use a timer to help children remember when it is time to stop.

Strive to expose your child to high-quality television and media materials. You may want to review your options with the following questions in mind:

- A. Is this considered developmentally appropriate for my child's age?
- B. Has it been reviewed by others or won awards from credible sources?
- C. Does it show diverse images of children and/or adults engaged in a range of non-stereotypical activities? For example, does a segment on baking a cake only show women cooking; are all the children, teenagers or adults in a music video one race or ethnicity? If so, how are they portrayed?



"Screen Time"

The number of minutes/hours that a child spends each day looking at a screen - television, movie, cell phone or handheld/ personal computer

- D. Is it free from bias, violence and sexually explicit content? For example, are there scary images? Characters fighting? Sexual themes or content?

Watch with and actively engage your child in thinking about what you are seeing on the screen. Discuss what characters are doing, how they might be feeling and use screen time as an opportunity to talk about your family's values.

Finally, develop and abide by clear and consistent "House Rules" for the frequency and use of television, media and computers in your home.