

## Practice What You Preach

### DEAR FAMILIES,

With the days getting shorter and the air getting crisper, families may find themselves spending more time indoors. As a result, there may also be an increase in children's screen time, or the amount of time that children spend in front of some type of electronic media. This can include television, computers, electronic games, and/or DVD's or other movie formats.

While these forms of media are often marketed toward children, research has shown that all of them can have a negative impact on children's social interactions, health and fitness, and ability to think creatively. Recent research into the subject has lead the American Academy of Pediatrics to recommend that children under the age of two have no access to electronic entertainment, and that those over that age be limited to one or two hours daily.

Beyond limiting a child's screen time, there are other things you can try. The website [www.common sense media.com](http://www.common sense media.com) offers the following suggestions to help improve the media and entertainment lives of kids and families.

- Share the movie, program and/or game as a family. Talk about what you are experiencing. After viewing, discuss the characters and storylines.
- Make sure that you are countering the images that they see with your own values and beliefs. What would your child have done if they were in the pictured situation? How do you feel about the advertised toy?
- Practice what you preach. Limit the time that you spend in front of a screen (including time on the phone) while children are awake.
- Avoid having any television on during meal times. Dedicate this time to talking about your day and other important topics.

Sometimes it is difficult to limit screen time because these forms of media can serve as electronic babysitters. Adults can get things done and know that their children are safe and engaged. Consider the following alternatives that will occupy children's time and minds in a more productive way:

- Keep a box of special toys (nothing with a battery) that you only provide to your child on those occasions when you need some time.
- A glob of playdough and plastic silverware at the kitchen table will keep a child occupied for hours.
- Create a box of dress-up clothes and keep it in the room where you are working. Provide a mirror so your child can see what he looks like with the new clothes.
- Collect junk mail and provide it to your child with pencils and stickers.

Like so many other things in life, using electronic media in moderation will provide your family with a healthy balance. By turning screens off, you could be turning on your child's creativity, critical thinking and so much more.

Respectfully,  
The Education Team



### HOW TO BECOME A MORE PURPOSEFUL PARENT

Often our busy lives seem full of many distractions. With the hustle and bustle of everyday, do you feel like you don't have time to do what you need to or that your skills as a parent could be improved? Here are some thoughts for being a more purposeful parent. None of these are new ideas, but it is often a great idea to review what we already know.

#### Use everyday tasks as moments to educate:

Your children are watching you all the time and looking to you for guidance in everything. While you are driving the car, shopping, doing the laundry, or going to the doctor's office - they are watching you. How you do things, what you say and the choices you make are opportunities for educable moments. Use time with your little one to enjoy conversations, make plans for the week or teach them how to do something new (like sort the laundry or pick the lowest-priced item).

#### Turn off your technology:

While certain products make our lives easier, others provide distractions that pull us away from our children's attention. If you are constantly checking your emails at home, using a handheld device or talking on the cell phone, break this habit. Do not let technology pull you away from time with your family.

#### Turn off your child's technology:

While movies in the car for long distance trips can be a blessing,

using them for around the town trips may not be necessary. Think about what messages you are giving your children. Can they learn to be entertained in the car in ways other than using technology? How about singing songs together, playing fun guessing games, making up silly stories, or simply watching a whole world of wonderful creatures, colors, shapes, etc. outside the window?

#### Make time with your child a priority:

We often hear the phrase "quality over quantity." However when it comes to our children, the better phrase is "quality AND quantity." Children need and yearn not only for positive time with us, but also for more time with us! In fact, sometimes it feels like they want all of our time. It is up to us to find a balance that puts our children first.

#### Plan for the Future:

Think about what you want for your child over the next several years. What character traits are important? What values do you want your child to have? What dreams do you have for your child? Write these down. Then think of what you need to do to make these things come true. Keep this list handy to review on those days when the hustle and bustle of everyday life gets you down.

Remember to be "present" with your children at all times. This is how they will learn to live purposeful lives themselves.

### CHILDTIME'S THE EMPOWERED CHILD™ CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

The Empowered Child™ curriculum supports your child by developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to succeed in kindergarten, throughout elementary education and across a lifetime of learning. Childtime teachers plan lessons in many important academic disciplines, including:

#### READING & WRITING

Your child learns to love and understand the written word by journal-writing, experiencing wonderful books, storytelling and participating in regular large and small group activities that focus on letter shapes and sounds.

#### MATHEMATICS

By counting, patterning, sorting, classifying, estimating and predicting, your child develops foundational math skills and an appreciation for the world of numbers.

#### SCIENCE

Performing experiments, investigating properties and observing cause and effect help your child build scientific thinking skills and a connection with the natural world.

Through The Empowered Child curriculum, children feel valued for who they are. Students leave our program well-prepared for their future education, empowered to acquire the skills they will need to become responsible members of their community, creative problem solvers and life-long learners.

If you have questions about the Childtime classroom experience, please speak with your director or contact us at [info@childtime.com](mailto:info@childtime.com).



If you would like to respond to anything you read, have parenting questions or child development topics that you'd like to see explored in future issues of this monthly newsletter, please email us at [education@childtime.com](mailto:education@childtime.com). We would love to hear from you!

## FOCUS ON LEARNING AT CHILDTIME®



## EXTEND THE CHILDTIME EXPERIENCE INTO YOUR HOME

**There are many ways to support your child's development at home. Here are some activities you can do together that will support your child's growth.**

**Infant** – Place some of your child's favorite toys on the floor. Cover them up using a blanket or towel. Ask your child where the toys went. Wait a few seconds to see if he takes the blanket off. If not, take the blanket off and say, "Here they are!"

**Beginning Steps/Exploration Station** – Gather some of your child's small soft toys and place them on the floor along with a laundry basket. Encourage your child to drop the toys into the basket. Move the basket away and see if she can toss them in.

**Early Learners** – Place three or four items inside of a bag. Have your child reach into the bag and try to identify the item without looking at it. Bring the item out and see if she was correct.

**Skill Builders/Kindergarten Connection** – Choose a color and see how many different things of that color your child can name. You might need to give him some clues. Write down his ideas and add to it later on. You could even have other members of the family come up with items also.

**Discovery Club** – Have your child go on a scavenger hunt inside or outside of the house. Have her find something that makes noise, something that tastes good, something that smells yucky and something that has more than three colors.

At Childtime, children feel safe and secure as they are introduced to reading by exploring books in a variety of ways. Research tells us that children are more likely to learn something when it is presented in a meaningful context and in a relaxed environment where children feel comfortable making mistakes.

When our teachers read with children, they learn to:

- Distinguish language used in books from conversational language.
- Anticipate what will happen next.
- Build comprehension of what they are hearing and later can read themselves.
- Put together the relation of characters, especially when they hear a story read again and again.
- Guess the sequence of events that will occur.
- Use social and cognitive skills.
- Have confidence in themselves as learners.
- Be comfortable with making mistakes.

The next time you are in your child's classroom, take a moment to look at the evidence of rich literacy experiences your child is offered, including a class library, labeled shelves and stories posted on the walls.

