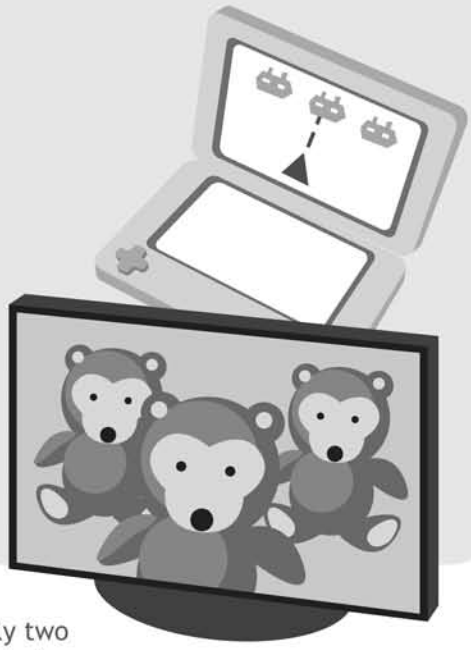
4C

Food Program

Healthy Habits: Screen Time

The use of tv, computers, video games, cell phones, etc., is increasing among children today.



Child care providers have a unique opportunity to shape young children's healthy development,

through promoting physical activity, screen time limitations, good nutrition, and healthy sleep practices.[1] The 4-C Food Program Tots at the Table initiative, funded by the ConAgra Foods Foundation, is designed to encourage child care providers to focus on promoting child wellness through setting personal goals related to child nutrition and physical activity.

1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, January 2010.

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The U.S. Surgeon General reports that nearly two thirds of kids ages 8-18 say TV is usually on during meals and nearly half report that TV is left on "most of the time" in their home. Children spend over 7 hours per day using entertainment media – that is more than 53 hours a week!

Studies have shown that when caregivers establish rules and implement them, screen time declines by more than 2 hours per day, leaving opportunities for more physical activity. Parents and caregivers need to be role models by limiting their own television time and spending more time with their children.

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This packet includes background on screen time and children, alternatives to screen time, make ahead meals, and information for families on screen time and role modeling.

How TV Affects Your Child

Most kids plug into the world of television long before they enter school. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF):[2]

- Two-thirds of infants and toddlers watch a screen an average of 2 hours a day
- Kids under age 6 watch an average of about 2 hours of screen media a day, primarily TV and videos or DVD's

Despite its advantages in education and entertainment, too much screen time can have negative effects on children's growth and development. Notably, children who consistently spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV are more likely to be overweight.

Best Practices:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that kids under 2 years old not watch any TV and that those older than 2 watch no more than 1 to 2 hours a day of quality programming.

2 How TV Affects Your Child. Nemours. 2010. Http://kidshealth.org

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Activities

TV Alternatives

Instead of watching TV or DVD's, try some of these fun activities. By limiting screen time, children have more opportunities for active play!

Spoon Race:	While balancing a plastic egg, ping pong ball, golf ball, or cotton ball on a spoon, race to a line and back without dropping the egg or ball. You can mark the line with cones or by stretching a piece of string or masking tape in a straight line in the grass.
Frisbee Toss:	Hang several hula hoops from tree branches of varying heights. Toss a foam ball or Frisbee through the hoops, counting the number of children that make it through.
Three Legged Race:	Pair up the children and use velcro straps to secure their legs together at the ankle and have them race eachother across the finish line.
Sack Race:	With each child having their feet in a pillowcase, have them race across the finish line or through an obstacle course.
Twister:	Dust off your old Twister board game and spin-away!
Tricycle Obstacle Course:	Set up an obstacle course with cans, buckets, and boxes and have the kids take turns riding through it to the end.
Ball Hug:	While holding a ball between their legs, the children should race to a line and back without dropping the ball.

Stretching Fun for Children

Painting a Rainbow: Do this with your child. Sit on the floor with legs straight out in front of you. Separate your feet so they are about 36 inches apart. Dip a pretend paintbrush into a pretend pot of paint (child picks a color) between your legs. Keeping your back as straight as possible, stretch from the hips to the left side of your body. Imagine that you are painting a rainbow over your left foot with your right hand. Paint several colors over your foot. Repeat this exercise with left hand and right foot.

Types of Activities for Children[1]

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity is: active recreation such as hiking, skateboarding, rollerblading, bicycle riding, or walking to school.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity is: active games involving running and chasing (such as tag), bicycle riding, jumping rope, martial arts, running, sports.

Muscle-strengthening physical activity is: games such as tug of war, modified push-ups (with knees on the floor), resistance exercises, rope or tree climbing, sit-ups, swinging on playground equipment or bars, gymnastics.

Bone-strengthening physical activity is: games such as hop-scotch, hopping, skipping, jumping, jumping rope, running, and sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, or tennis.

1 www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/what_counts.html

Prepare Ahead of Time

Screen time is often used in family child care settings for transition time – allowing a provider to make lunch, prepare a snack, or get children ready for a nap. Instead of using screen time during meal prep, try including some of the older children in making part of the snack or meal. Or try making and freezing meals ahead of time. Here are a couple of recipes that you can make in bulk, and use for multiple meals.

If you freeze meals, make sure to follow food safety guidelines, including instructions on how to chill, label and date, freeze, store, thaw, and reheat the meals.

Go to www.nfsmi.org for more USDA Recipes for Child Care.

Bean Burritos

Combine onions, granulated garlic, pepper, tomato paste, water, chili powder, cumin, paprika, and onion powder. Blend well. Simmer for 15 minutes. Using a mixer with paddle attachment, puree beans for 4-5 minutes on medium speed until beans are a smooth consistency. Combine ingredients from step 1, and shredded cheese with pureed beans. Place tortillas in a warm oven for 3 minutes (or until warm). Portion ½ cup of the bean mixture onto each tortilla. Fold around beans envelope style. Place folded burritos seam side down in deep pans which have been lightly coated with pan release spray. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes.
Sprinkle shredded cheese (optional) evenly over burritos before serving.

Ingredients:

1/3 C. 3 T. Chopped onions
1 t. Ground black or white pepper
2 C. water
1 T. Ground cumin
1 ½ t. onion powder
8 cups pinto or black beans (canned or dry)
8 cups reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded
25 enriched flour or whole wheat tortillas
1 ½ t. Granulated garlic
1 ½ C. 1 t. canned tomato paste
1 T. 1 ½ t. chili powder
1 ½ t. paprika

Very Veggie Soup

In a heavy pot combine stock, tomato paste, celery, onions, pepper, parsley, and granulated garlic. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add corn, carrots, green beans, and green peas. (Frozen vegetables may be combined with canned vegetables) Cover and simmer for 25 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.

½ cup of soup provides ¼ cup of vegetables. This is a great recipe to use if you have garden or Farmers Market produce. It is also a good recipe to have older children help prepare (chopping, adding to the soup). You can also add protein such as beans to the soup.

Ingredients:

2 qt. 1 ¼ C. Chicken or beef stock
½ C 2 T (1/2 12 oz can) Canned tomato paste
¾ C. 1 ½ t. Fresh celery, chopped
2.3 C. Fresh onions, chopped
¼ t. Ground black or white pepper
1 T. dried parsley
1 ½ t. Granulated garlic
½ C. 3 T.Frozen whole kernel corn
¾ C. Diced carrots
½ C. Green beans

Family Information

Encourage Family Activities

Here are some interesting facts to share with parents about TV time:[1]

- The first two years of a child's life are especially important for the brain's growth and development. Parents and caregivers should provide educational and stimulating activities during this time to aid healthy development.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children 2 years old and younger DO NOT watch television. Instead, they should engage in active play with adults and children.
- It is recommended that children over age 2 do not watch more than 2 hours of TV a day. Any TV that they do watch should be screened by caregivers, and commercials should be avoided.

Commercials

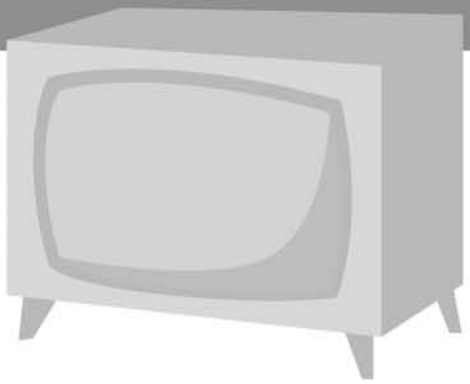
- According to the AAP, children in the U.S. see more than 40,000 commercials each year.
- Under the age of 8 years, most kids don't understand that commercials are selling a product.
- To limit commercials, have your kids watch public television stations, record programs to play without commercials, or buy or rent DVD's

1 Potpourri June 2010, Volume 36, Issue 6. Association for Child Development

Role Modeling to Teach Healthy Habits

Offer fun alternatives to television:

- Limit the number of TV-watching hours by keeping plenty of books, games, toys, and puzzles available for your children.
- Keep TV out of bedrooms.
- Turn off the TV during meals.
- Don't allow school-age children to watch TV while doing homework.
- Preview programs before your kids watch them.



Lifelong Benefits of Physical Activity

McCalls Health Report - November 1999: Hugging the Remote Control

"If you need added incentive to cut back on couch time, look no further: Physical activity not only helps prevent heart disease, it's a prime defense against cancer as well. In a 14-year study of more than 25,000 Norwegian women, scientists found that those who exercised four or more hours a week during their reproductive years lowered their risk of breast cancer by 37 percent. And in their ongoing research on female nurses, Harvard scientists have shown that for every half hour a woman walks each day, her risk of colon cancer drops by 10 percent. Why so much gain from so little movement? Experts believe exercise stimulates the immune system. "Physical activity also helps speed the transit of digested food, along with carcinogens, through the colon," explains Winawer. "Plus, it helps keep weight down." Putting in as little as 30 minutes (one sitcom's worth) of heart-pumping activity - like brisk walking, stationary or outdoor biking or swimming - at least five days a week is enough to help provide disease protection."

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