



STARS Training Outline

Child Care Unplugged: What do we do about TV, DVDs and computer games?

Introduction

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review agenda

Ice-breaker: Getting to Know You Screen-time Game

1. Each provider and training team member is given a game sheet (*on page 5*) and pen.
2. Ask them to move around the room and find people who match one of the descriptions in the box. When they find a match, the person who matches the description writes their initials in the box.
3. The provider who completes all the squares/most squares in 3 minutes wins a prize.

Define Screen Time

Screen time is defined as the time spent with all entertainment screen media, including TV, DVDs and videos, video games, computers and the Internet.

Objectives and Training Format

1. Review learning objectives.
By the end of the training today you will be able to...
 - ✓ Explain to others why it is important to limit screen time for children
 - ✓ Tell others about the guidelines on screen time for children
 - ✓ Take home ideas on how to reduce screen time for children
 - ✓ Talk to parents about limiting the screen time for children at home
2. Review format of training.
This training will be in the format of a short PowerPoint presentation followed by a discussion. Please share your ideas and experiences. Members of the training team will be taking notes on a flip chart to help keep track of the discussion and to help summarize all of the points at the end of the session.



Objective 1: Explain to others why it is important to limit screen time for children

- Studies suggest that preschool children in the US watch on average 2 ½ hours of screens a day, and that approximately one third of preschool children have a TV in their bedrooms. The American Academy of Pediatrics also estimates that the average child watches approximately 40,000 commercials per year.
- Too much screen time in early life is associated with poor school performance, attention problems, less creative imagination and aggressive behavior.
- Screen time is also associated with overweight. Some of the reasons why screen time may be associated with overweight include the effects of food advertising, snacking in front of the TV, and physical inactivity.
- Further information and references are available on the Web site: www.waabam.org

Objective 2: Tell others about the guidelines on screen time for children

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 2 years of age do not watch any screens at all.
- For children over 2 years of age, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends they spend no more than 1 to 2 hours per day with screens—and that this should be quality programming only.
- In addition, they recommend that children not have a TV in their bedroom.

Objective 3: Take home ideas on how to reduce screen time for children

So what can we do about it, how can we reduce the amount of screen time for children?

Discussion points:

- How do you think the children would react if, when they arrived at your home one day, the TV was off and there was a cover over it? Is this feasible for you in your child care?
- Is the drive to use screens coming from the children or you as providers? (or phrased another way, would the children find it harder living without screens or would you as providers?)
- Do you use TV as a transition between activities, for example when making lunch or when getting them ready for nap time? What are the issues involved here, are you concerned about child safety when you are distracted? Is there any other way we could tackle safety? Would you consider playing music instead, for example soothing music after lunch may help relax the children and settle them down to sleep. Is this feasible for you in your child care?



- Would putting up posters saying ‘Switch off the TV!’ be useful in helping to reduce screen time? For example, would it help remind you not to switch on the TV?
Activity: Take 10 minutes and make a screen time poster (time permitting).
- Would having a written set of guidelines (a policy) on the wall or in your parent handbook help reduce the amount screen time for children? What are the benefits of having a written policy? Have you considered, (1) that everyone knows what the rules are, (2) that the parents know that their children’s health and development is important to you and that you have thought about it and are doing something about it, and (3) that the children know the boundaries. Children, especially of a certain age, like rules. For example, how often have you heard children say ‘but you can’t do that, you’re not allowed to do that, or it’s against the rules’?
- Would planning ahead with the children help reduce screen time? For example, going through the TV guide and picking out quality programs, and only switching the TV on for those programs? Or, selecting a really good DVD, and only watching that in a day? TV and DVDs, when used appropriately, can be very useful as an educational tool for children, for example a documentary about penguins.
- Do you use TV as a reward or punishment? For example, if you’re good we can watch a DVD or a cartoon, or if you are not good I will switch off the TV? Do you think avoiding using TV as a reward or punishment would help reduce screen time? No-one wants something more than the person it has just been taken away from.

Objective 4: Talk to parents about limiting screen time for children at home

Have any of you spoken to parents about TV, DVDs or computer games at home? What did you say? What was their response? If not, what are your experiences in general of talking to parents, for example about diet, toilet-training or discipline, and about consistency between home and your child care? Would inserting a section about limiting screen time into your parent handbook help get the message out and initiate communication with parents?

Activity: Explore the following scenarios as a group.

1. I am the parent, and in general conversation one day while dropping my child off I tell you that we have bought a new TV and that we have put the old TV in our child’s bedroom. What do you say to me?
2. I am the parent, and I tell you that my child will only go to sleep at nap time if they watch TV. What do you say to me?
3. I am the parent, and I tell you that my child likes to eat meals in front of the TV. What do you say to me?
4. My child tells you all about the program they saw yesterday in which peoples arms were chopped off or the talk show where family members starting fighting each other. What do you say to me to me when I come to collect my child?



5. My child refuses the foods you offer them and instead demands the next new thing in brightly colored sugary cereal they have seen advertised on the TV. What do you say to me when I come to collect my child?

Parents have more power than you to influence the amount of TV children watch. Remember that an estimated one-third of preschool children have a TV in their bedroom. It is also important that parents and providers support each other and work together (be consistent) in their approach and activities to help child development.

WAABAM Web Site Resource

The Washington Active Bodies Active Minds (WAABAM) project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is designed to provide information and resources for people who care for preschool children—child care providers and families.

The Web site (www.waabam.org) contains a lot of information and resources on the reasons behind the link between screen time and child health and development. There are resources for both families and early childhood professionals. Materials available for you to download and print include: posters; information and training booklets for child care providers; sample screen time policy; and handouts for parents on the “Top 10 reasons to reduce TV watching at home.”

Summary

1. Review learning objectives and notes taken on the flip chart during the discussion.
2. Refer providers to the WAABAM brochure and strategies handout (*on page 6*) as a summary of screen-time facts, the impact of screens on health, and screen-time guidelines.

Wrap-up: Thank-you and Evaluation

1. Thank providers for participating in the training.
2. Distribute STARS evaluation sheets and certificates.

Filler Questions

- How much TV or videos did you watch when you were a child?
- Do you find that children ask you for foods they see advertised on TV? For example, fast food (McDonalds happy meals), sugary breakfast cereals, candy, soda?
- Have you ever seen any evidence of the detrimental effects of too much TV in the children you care for? For example, children reporting having nightmares, or have you noticed that children who watch more TV are heavier than other children, or that children who watch more TV develop more slowly or have more difficulties than other children?



GETTING TO KNOW YOU SCREEN-TIME GAME

1. Move around the room and find people who match one of the descriptions in the box.
2. When you find a match, have that person put their initials in the box.



I walk to keep fit	I loved track when I was in school	I have taken part in a fun/charity walk or run
I have a vegetable garden	I raised my children without TV	I enjoy dancing
I enjoy listening to music	I have parachuted from an airplane	I do not have a TV at home





Ideas on how to reduce screen time for children

1. Limit the use of screens as a transition between activities, for example, while making lunch or caring for other children.
2. Put up posters about fun activities or turning-off screens.
3. Have a written set of guidelines (a policy) on limiting screen time in your childcare facility.
4. Plan ahead with the TV guide or DVDs available to select only quality programs to watch that day or week.
5. Avoid using screens as a reward or punishment. For example: “If you are good, you can watch a movie.”
6. Talk to parents about reducing screen time for children at home.

