



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Healthy Screen Time Habits

Families are in an unprecedented time of trying to juggle work, school, childcare, and all while staying safe. Keeping children engaged, safe, and away from too much screen use can be a challenge, especially during recommended stay-at-home times. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends avoiding media use for children 2 years and under except video chatting; and no more than one hour of high-quality programming per day for 2 to 5-year olds. The AAP has released further guidance for caregivers to keep children healthy and engaged while balancing their current exposure to media.

This month's newsletter will focus on some of the following tips from the AAP that encourage caregivers in the responsible use of electronic media in a way that supports their child's healthy development.

- ♥ **Modeling is critical.** Limit your own media use when children are around.
- ♥ **Content matters.** The quality of content is more important than time spent with media. Research apps, movies, and shows using *Common Sense Media*.
- ♥ **Communicate with providers.** Talk to your child's teacher or child care provider about age-appropriate online and offline activities your child can do.
- ♥ **Co-engagement counts.** Family participation with media encourages social interactions and learning. Your engagement (through questions and discussions) is essential for your child's understanding of what he is viewing on the screen.



- ♥ **Prioritize daily “unplugged” activities.** Help your family relax and communicate by taking walks, playing games, reading, and having unstructured play time

This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

The first two years of your child's life are a critical time for his brain development. During this time, responsive interactions between you and your child are essential to his early brain development, affecting his physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. Why does the American Academy of Pediatrics currently say "no screen time" for infants and toddlers? Very young children learn best by relating to real people, moving around, and interacting with their surroundings. A child is more likely to engage in higher level interactive play—exploring, experimenting, interacting, and learning with others when there are no electronic media distractions (TV, tablets, etc.)

The following tips can help reduce your media usage which supports healthy development:

- ♥ **Reduce background noise.** Television noise running in the background has been shown to interfere with an infant's language development. Use this quiet time to sing and respond to your child's babbles to increase his



language development.

- ♥ **Reduce your media use** by placing social media apps in a folder on your smartphone or tablet, and turning off notifications in your settings. Take the extra time to take your child outside for a walk. As he gets older, modeling healthy habits by reducing media usage and increasing physical activity will help him to do the same.

Activity for Infants: "Wheels on the Bus" Baby Massage

What You Need:

Baby oil or lotion (*optional)

What to Do:

1. When baby is alert, place him on his back on a blanket.
2. Warm up your hands by gently rubbing them together with baby oil or lotion (*optional).
3. Sing "The Wheels On The Bus" while gently massaging baby:

The wheels on the bus go round and round.
Round and round. Round and round.
The wheels on the bus go round and round. All through the town
(gently move his legs in a circle, as if riding a bicycle).
4. Continue singing about: the wipers on the bus go swish swish swish (gently move his arms back and forth); the horn on the bus goes beep beep beep (gently tap the bottom of baby's feet); and the people on the bus go up and down (stroke baby's arms from shoulder to wrist)



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

COVID-19 has created a change in our daily lives and these changes in routine can be especially stressful for toddlers. Make a plan together and talk with your child about why he is staying home and what your daily routine will be. This will help him know when to watch an approved show or play a game together, while avoiding power struggles over devices. Let him help create a daily schedule with photos or clip art that can be hung somewhere at his eye level. Point out the schedule throughout the day to let him know what is coming up next.

The following tips can help reduce media time which supports healthy development:

♥ **Slow it down-** If your child enjoys watching shows about animals, show him live stream webcams from <https://www.earthcam.com/events/animalcams/> and talk about what he is seeing to build language and connections to what he has experienced in the past. Live cameras have been shown to lessen overstimulation since the cameras mimic real-life pace.



- ♥ **Bedtime routine-** Instead of watching a show to settle down before bedtime, try creating a calming routine of a warm bath, warm milk, followed by snuggling up for a bedtime story.
- ♥ **Mealtime routine –** During meals, turn the TV off and redirect your child by playing a game of *I Spy*, reading a story, or engaging him in what “special” food will be revealed.

Activity for Toddlers: *Mealtime Magic*

What You Need:

Clean towel or paper bag

What to Do:

1. Before setting the table, choose one dish (e.g. sliced apples) to be the “special” food to be revealed.
2. Hide the apples using the towel or paper bag and place it on the table.
3. Say, “It’s time for lunch! I wonder what the hidden food is today. Can you guess? No peeking!”
4. Encourage him to think of different foods by giving him hints. “It’s something that is red on the outside, sweet, and grows on trees. When we eat it, it goes “crunch!”
5. After lunch, show him images of apple trees and pretend to pick the apples by stretching and jumping.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

According to the National Association for the Education for Young Children, technology is a tool that can support the development and learning of preschool-aged children and older, when used in intentional and age-appropriate ways, and in conjunction with other traditional tools and materials. If you choose to introduce electronic media to your child, it's important to identify clear strategies to manage its use, be an active participant with your child's learning, and to be intentional in how your child is using it.

The following are some strategies for integrating technology while supporting healthy development.

♥ **Move and Groove!** Encourage your child to be physically active and spend time outdoors daily if possible. Incorporate technology such as playing a song and dancing together! *Common Sense Media* has a recommended list of dance, yoga, and other apps to get children active and outdoors.



♥ **Explore your neighborhood playground.** Do you live near a *Biba* playground? These intelligent playgrounds combine the benefits of outdoor exercise with smartphone games to get kids moving, thinking and interacting. See *Community Resources* section for more details.

Activity for Preschoolers: *Play-Doh with Play-Doh Touch*

What You Need:

Playdough
Smartphone or Tablet

What to Do:

1. Use your favorite store bought or homemade playdough recipe.
2. Invite your child to create a creature using the playdough. If he needs support, show him how to pinch and mold the dough to create arms, legs, hair, and even facial features.
3. Ask your child questions such as, "Does your creature have a name? What kinds of sounds does he make?"
4. Download the **Play-Doh TOUCH** app.
5. Help your child to scan the playdough creature in the Shape to Life Studio and watch it come to life in the virtual world!



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others
- ♥ Learn to cooperate with others

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ Develop skills needed for writing

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Recognize math concepts like numbers, sizes, shapes, sequences, volume, measurement, and time.



- ♥ Develop early math skills.

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show him how to handle items safely and allow him to do as much as he is capable of. Praise his efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Kalua Pua'a

Adapted from: <https://www.polynesia.com/recipes/main-dishes/kalua-puaa>

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pork butt, 3 lbs | Ti leaves (rinse and remove core) |
| Hawaiian (or sea) salt, 3-T | *½ tsp Liquid Smoke (optional) |
| Water, ½ gal. | |



Directions:

1. Have keiki help pour water into medium roasting pan.
2. Rub Hawaiian (or sea) salt on pork.
3. Help keiki wrap pork with ti leaves and place it in the roasting pan. Talk about the cultural practice of cooking Kalua Pig in an "Imu" (underground oven).
4. Cover roasting pan with aluminum foil.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 2-3 hours, or until meat is soft.
6. As it is cooking, show keiki how the traditional imu is built with pictures or videos such as <https://vimeo.com/141860403>
7. Remove foil and ti leaves, debone and shred pork.
8. Add liquid smoke and more Hawaiian salt to taste

Resources

Family Media Plan

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

This online tool will help you to think about media based on the age of your child to create goals and rules that are in line with your family's values.

Common Sense Media

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Site that provides unbiased information, trusted advice, and innovative tools to help families use media and technology as a positive force in all children's lives.

Biba Playground

<https://www.playbiba.com/where-to-play>

Biba smart playgrounds is a research based enhanced play experience that encourages children to get active outdoors. Find one near you!



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Baby Einstein: Mirror Me! by Julie Aigner-Clark

This book has a mirror on each page that encourages little ones to recognize the various parts of their face in a playful way.

Press Here by Herve Tullet

Each page of this engaging book gives directions to the reader to make this book come alive! See how a simple dot multiplies, changes direction, and grow in size using the power of imagination.

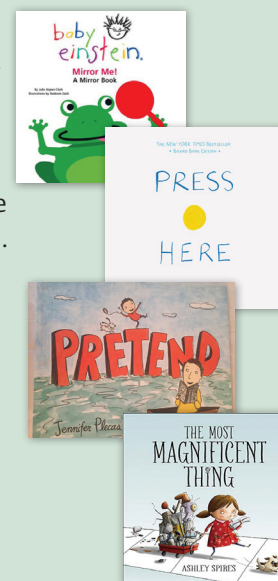
Preschoolers

Pretend by Jennifer Pheasant

This book shares how a mouse struggles to express his anger. His animal friends model different ways, only for the mouse to discover his own way be best.

The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires

Watch how a little girl makes the most magnificent thing by trying again and again. By watching the girl tinkering and hammering and then tweaking and fiddling, little readers will be inspired to create their own inventions time and time again.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii