

# big PLANS in print

Connecting Big Plans' Parents to their Communities

Issue 24 March · April 2017

## Kids Spell Love T-I-M-E

Parents can sometimes feel that they are spending so much time meeting their kids needs and wants: cooking, cleaning, driving, volunteering, school; that there isn't that much more time to give.

It seems that there is a disconnect between what parents are feeling, "Do you know how much I do for you?" and what kids are experiencing, "When will you be with me?" Research shows that kids just want their parents' presence. It doesn't have to be a lot of time, it just needs to be intentional time when your kids have you **with** them not **doing things for** them.

We found another very interesting statistic recently. It noted that in 1997 families spent 50% less time talking to each other than they did in 1981. The Smart phone made it's debut in 1997 so we can only imagine how much less talking time there is now. It's important to remember that you are not spending time **with** your children IF you or they are holding or viewing an electronic device - both parties have just become less important.

### Losing track of time

How much of our lives are lost to the phone? It's not uncommon to hear parents telling kids, "Hurry, hurry! There's no time to dawdle!"

Many people feel that there just isn't enough time. A Global Web Index 2016 survey shows that Canadians spend an average of 1.4 hours per day on social media and 5.2 hours on the internet in total. The conflict may lie therein. How do we not have enough time AND have enough time for 1.4 hours on Social Media per day?

As with so many things, finding the time is about creating the intention and carving out the time for what is important. We're not saying don't do it. We're saying, get clear on how much time you are devoting to screens versus how much you want to be spending there.

Time Management specialists recommend setting clear boundaries around email and social media use. The clearer they are for you, the easier they are to enforce. Setting specific social media times can be very effective. Use simple tools to hold yourself accountable.

Achievement coach, Erin Skye Kelly shares, "I use an alarm clock to remind myself to go to bed..."

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Parents Learning About Needs and Skills

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My kids have one too which cues them to start the bedtime routine and leave time for their treasured books."

**Ask yourself these questions:**

- How much time would you like to be spending on social media each day?
- How much time would you like to be spending connecting with your kids?
- When will you have your device with you?
- When will you put away your screens?
- How much time do you need to get the day to day tasks done?
- How much time will you spend in the car?

One way to make this work is combining the time: car + connecting with kids; meals + connecting with kids. You'll know what makes sense for your family. The best way to connect with your family is to create the space to do exactly that.

Remember: kids spell love T-I-M-E.

Article Courtesy of Parenting Power:  
www.parentingpower.ca

## Tips to Reduce Screen Time

- Make sure that children have plenty of time for hands-on, creative and active play. They also often love helping with everyday activities, including gardening, baking, and folding laundry.
- If you choose to use screens with your children, set rules early on about when, where, what, and how much. Screen activities with obvious end-points can help a lot with time limits.
- Remove televisions and other devices from children's bedrooms.
- Turn off screens when they are not in use. Parents talk less to children when background television is on and it interrupts the kind of play essential for learning.
- Take stock of your own screen time—remember that you are your child's most powerful role model.

For more ideas, research and details visit  
www.commercialfreechildhood.org

# SCREEN TIME & KIDS' HEALTH

SCREEN TIME is more than just watching TV. It also includes time spent on phones, tablets, and computers.

Children who spend LESS time watching television in early years tend to:

LEARN  
BETTER

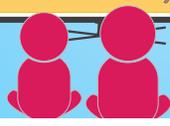
EAT  
HEALTHIER

MOVE  
MORE



The MORE TIME children engage with screens now, the HARDER it is to stay away as they get older.

2 HOURS OF TV PER DAY HAS BEEN SHOWN TO INCREASE THE RISK OF OBESITY IN 3-5 YEAR OLDS.



Irregular sleep patterns and delays in speech development have been linked to screen time for children under 3 years old.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- ZERO screen time for children under 2 years old.
- Less than TWO HOURS a day of educational programming for older children.

Children who spend less time watching television in early years tend to do better in school, have a healthier diet, be more physically active, and be better able to engage in schoolwork in later elementary school.

Pagani, L., Fitzpatrick, C., Barnett, T.A., & Dubow, E. (2010). Prospective associations between early childhood television exposure and academic, psychosocial, and physical well-being by middle childhood.

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>18 months or younger</p> <p>No screens are still best. The exception is live video chat with family and friends.</p> | <p>18 months to 2 years</p> <p>Limit screen time and avoid solo use. Choose high-quality educational programming, and watch with kids to ensure understanding.</p> | <p>2 to 5 years</p> <p>Limit screen time to an hour a day. Parents should watch as well to ensure understanding and application to their world.</p> | <p>6 or older</p> <p>Place consistent limits on the time spent and types of media. Don't let screen time affect sleep, exercise or other behaviors.</p> |
|---|--|---|---|

The American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidelines on how much screen time is appropriate for children.

## The New Guidelines on Screen Time for Preschool-Aged Children: The Importance of Interaction in Early Language Acquisition

March 21, 2017 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Alberta Children's Hospital - Theatre \* Also available as a Webinar

In a world where 'screen time' is rapidly increasing, how we interact with our children is changing. We will present the revised guidelines on digital media use from the American Academy of Pediatrics (released in October 2016) with a focus on the impacts of screen time on the development of language in the preschool years.

**FREE - Register by visiting <http://fcr.albertahealthservices.ca/ces/login>**

For more information: email [ces@ahs.ca](mailto:ces@ahs.ca) or call (403) 955-7420

## Try This At Home

Do you have a toddler or preschooler who enjoys imaginative play? Try this:

### **The Washing Basket (or a cardboard box)**

Do you remember riding in the washing basket as a kid? Was it a plane? A boat? A car? A train? With a little imagination and a cheerful song our washing basket transforms into whichever vehicle we wish it to be.

For more great ideas, download the *PLAY PLANNER PDF Calendar* by [childhood101.com/play-planner](http://childhood101.com/play-planner). You'll find links to a month's worth of fabulous activities for kids and families.



## Share Rhymes & Songs With Your Child Every Day!

"If children know eight nursery rhymes by the age of four years old, they are usually the best readers by the time they are eight. From rhymes, children learn words, sentences, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, all of which they'll find later in the books they read"

*(Mem Fox, Reading Magic, 2001)*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5,  
Once I caught a fish alive,  
6, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
Then I let it go again.  
Why did you let it go?  
Because it bit my finger so.  
Which finger did it bite?  
This little finger on my right.

Here is the beehive (make a fist)  
Where are the bees?  
Hiding inside where nobody sees  
Watch them come creeping out  
of the hive  
One, two, three, four, five  
(release one finger at a time  
from the fist/hive)  
...BUZZ-ZZZ (wiggle fingers)



## How to Make Your Own Calm Down Jar or Bottle

Designed to soothe and relax, the swirling patterns created by glitter, water and food colouring are ideal for calming down a stressed out child (or adult, for that matter) - leading to their alternative name, 'calm down jars'.

Just give them a good shake, then watch until the glitter settles in the bottom of the jar to refocus and refresh an overwhelmed mind.

You will need:

- A Jar or Plastic Bottle with Lid
- Hot Water (If using glitter glue, you will need hot water so that it does not become clumpy and separate.)
- Glitter Glue
- 1 Drop Food Coloring
- Fine Glitter

*Note: For younger children, we'd recommend using a plastic jar or bottle rather than a glass jar, to prevent any accidents!*

Add the hot water to your jar or bottle until it reaches around a third of the way up (\*see note). Add about two tablespoons of glitter glue and stir well until combined with water. Add one drop of food colour and stir. You can add more or less depending on your preferred shade, but remember not to add too much or the mixture will become very dark and it will become hard to see the glitter. (\*Note - If using a bottle, you may want to whisk the mixture really well prior to pouring into the bottle.)

Pour in the glitter until there is about a 1/2 to 3/4" layer on the bottom.

Fill the jar /bottle with warm water and leave about 1" at the top for shaking room.

Put the lid on really tight and

**shake,**  
**shake,**  
**shake!**



photo credit: [www.goodtoknow.co.uk](http://www.goodtoknow.co.uk)

# Teaching Kids How To Dress Themselves

Did you know that kids begin to demonstrate dressing skills as early as one year old? Claire Heffron, co-author for The Inspired Treehouse and a pediatric occupational therapist in a preschool/primary school setting, shares some of her favorite ways to work on independence with dressing skills with kids:

1. **Practice pulling clothing up and down, on and off:** Visit [theinspiredtreehouse.com](http://theinspiredtreehouse.com) for ideas on how to practice pulling clothing up and down using Pop Toobs, a Theraband, and a Body Sock.
2. **Slippers:** Another great way to practice putting on and taking off shoes is with slippers! They're softer, less rigid, and easier to get on and off – but still require the same movement and a little bit of strength too!
3. **Use the “flip trick”!** This one is great for increasing your child's independence with putting on his coat. Place his coat on a table, chair, or couch with the collar toward him and the front of the coat facing up. Have the child stand facing his coat and place his hands and arms partway through the sleeves. Show him how to flip the coat up and over his head, sliding it the rest of the way onto his arms as he goes!
4. **Play dress-up!** As an OT, this is my favorite way to work on dressing and clothing fasteners with kids. Practicing putting your clothes on is a whole lot more fun when you come out looking like a firefighter or a princess, right? Keep a bin of **dress-up clothes** in your living room or classroom and encourage kids to put on and take off shirts, dresses, pants, and accessories. Bigger clothes are great for practicing the motions needed for dressing without the resistance of elastic or tight-fitting items.
5. **Save it for bedtime and bath time!** I often recommend to the families I work with at school to save practice with dressing skills until the evening, when things aren't as rushed and stressful. Have kids help with taking off their clothes at the end of the day and then with putting on their pajamas, socks, and slippers! The most important thing is to give kids an opportunity at some point during the day to practice these skills independently!
6. **Work on clothing fasteners:** As your child is working on dressing and undressing himself, you can also work in some practice with the fine motor skills needed for buttons, zippers, and other clothing fasteners too!



7. **Play with tape and stickers:** Using colorful tape and stickers is a fun way to help kids practice reaching for different parts of their bodies. Place stickers or tape on the back pockets, on the backs of the shoulders, or on the bottoms of feet for the child to find and pull off. I have found this activity to be *super* helpful for kids with tactile hypersensitivities who are very cautious about practicing with clothing during therapy sessions.
8. **Play with scarves and streamers:** Try tying a scarf or streamer in a loop (as mentioned online in #1 with the Theraband) and pulling it onto and off of the body. Or play streamer “hide and seek”. Place a streamer in the child's back pocket, under her shirt, or in the bottom of her pant leg or sleeve for her to reach for and retrieve.
9. **Strengthen those hands!** Strengthening the muscles of the hands gives kids the foundation they need to be able to grasp and pull clothing up and down, on and off. This rubber band activity is a great hand strengthener and these are some of our other favorite activities for building hand strength in kids.
10. **Make a sock helper:** Visit our website to learn how to make a simple DIY sock helper. It has been a huge hit at our house, helping my middle son learn to put his socks on independently.

11. **Get organized:** Before you even start on dressing skills, why not set the child up for success and independence by getting his closet and clothes organized in a functional, child-friendly way?

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