Creating home environments that help kids succeed at school

Routines change when kids are out of school over the holiday break. Plan ahead for how your kids will spend time – communicate expectations and limits.

Young children who consistently spend hours in front of the TV or playing computer games are at risk for increased anger problems, lower reading scores, and overall performance in school.

Studies recommend that children spend no more than 2 hours per day watching TV and movies, or playing computer or video games that are not related to school work. The American Association of Pediatrics suggests no TV for children under the age of 2.

Children learn from their parents. Pay attention to how much TV you are watching, videogames you are playing, Internet you are surfacing, and texting you are doing.

What You Can Do
Take time to play with your child. You both can get active and have fun at the same time! Increased screen time typically results from kids spending time by themselves.

Keep computers and TVs out of bedrooms and in a location where you can monitor them.

BE CONSISTENT in what you tell and expect from your child.

FOLLOW THROUGH on consequences.

Brainstorm with your child a list of interesting, fun things to do over the holiday break. Create a list to post on the refrigerator.

PROVEN PARENTING PRACTICES

- Routines at home help kids learn
- Learning at home helps kids learn at school
- Setting limits with love helps kids learn at school
- Good nutrition helps kids learn
- Physical activity helps kids learn
- Sleep helps kids learn
- Community programs help kids learn at school

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How Media Influences **Sleep** in Children

Adequate sleep keeps kids’ brains working properly and helps them learn and remember things. Watching an action-packed TV show, playing an intense computer or video game, or having a text conversation right before bed can make it difficult for kids to fall asleep. When kids don’t have enough sleep it’s harder to wake them up in the morning, their day may not start out well, and they are not as attentive at school. Research suggests that children 5-10 years of age need 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night.

**WINTER BREAK ACTIVITIES**

**PEANUT BUTTER BIRD FEEDER**
- Slice of bread
- Peanut butter
- Cookie cutter
- Knife to spread peanut butter
- Yarn, ribbon, or string
- Birdseed on a plate

**Directions:**
- PUNCH shape out of bread with cookie cutter.
- THREAD the yarn through the hole.
- SPREAD peanut butter on bread.
- PUSH side with peanut butter into the bird seed (both sides OK).
- HANG outside on tree for birds to eat.

**SUGAR ORNAMENTS**
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon glitter
- 2 teaspoons water
- Yarn, ribbon, or string

**Directions:**
- MIX all ingredients together in a bowl.
- PRESS the mixture into shaped cookie cutters.
- POKE hole in top with a drinking straw or pencil.
- LET DRY overnight.
- REMOVE from cookie cutter the next day.
- STRING a loop of yarn through the hole to hang.

**OTHER GOOD ACTIVITY IDEAS**
do PUZZLES • go to the LIBRARY • READ • play card GAMES • make a SNOWMAN • go for a WALK

**How Violent Video Games IMPACT CHILDREN**

Children who play violent video games are at risk of forming poor behaviors.

**Research Shows**
Video games that show fighting and killing can give children negative feelings and the desire to cause harm to others. Violent video games can lower caring feelings toward others and increase problem behaviors such as hitting or harming someone’s property.

**What Parents Can Do**
- Monitor the types of games children bring home or buy.
- Use the video game rating system.
  - **Examples:**
    - M-rating is for mature audiences;
    - EC or E-rating is for fun and educational purposes.

**RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

**CHILDREN AND TV PODCAST**

**VIDEO GAMES AND OTHER MEDIA: PROS AND CONS – SCIENCE OF PARENTING**
https://store.extension.iastate.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=13423

**OBESITY AND OVERUSE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA**
https://store.extension.iastate.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=13422