

## FORWARD CORNER

### The 1<sup>st</sup> Week in May is Screen Free Week

As we head into another month of stay at home and social distancing, many early childhood programs remain closed. For these programs, might we suggest that staff use this time to chip away at their professional development hours and use this time to explore ways to enhance their nutrition and physical activity curriculum for when children return? The YWCA is setting up ZOOM trainings and FORWARD has been asked to submit Healthy Living Topics for potential training. We hope to see you soon in a ZOOM training.

For programs still serving children and families or for those communicating with families, we urge you to promote healthy living by encouraging families to limit screen time. During the stay at home order, many families have had to loosen their screen time rules just to get through the week. In lieu of the more traditional Turn Off Your TV for the week campaign, this year, the organizers are suggesting a scaled down approach called: Screen-Free Saturdays. Screen free Saturdays are an opportunity to take a break from the seemingly endless noise of quarantine life and recharge for the coming week; a chance to play, explore, and rediscover the joys of life beyond ad-supported screens. And they are great for our mental and physical health to boot! If Saturdays do not work, consider another day or at a minimum chunk of time within the week to turn off the TV and focus on other things. To fill your screen free day, consider these recommendations.

[101 Screen Free Activities English](#)

[101 Actividades Libres de Pantallas](#)

For more information on Screen Free Saturdays [click here](#).

During the rest of the week, follow the following screen time recommendations:

- Do not allow screen time for children under two. Studies show this just is not healthy.
- For children over two, limit daily screen time to two hours or less.
- No TV or screen time during meals and no TV in the bedroom.
- Plan your TV watching each day, do not just mindlessly channel surf.
- Be informed about what your children are watching. Watch TV with them and discuss the characters and what they have learned.
- Minimize mindless eating and calories. Make a family rule that says no snacking during screen time.
- Minimize children's unhealthy exposure to advertising. Opt for videos or streaming (with no ads).
- Take a break every ½ hour or so to stand up, move around, dance a bit, etc. Limit sitting to no more than 30 minutes without a break.
- Turn off the TV if no one is watching. Resist the urge to let it be "background noise".

### **JOIN THE HEALTHY MOVEMENT TODAY BY TAKING ACTION!**

**May Call to Action for Families:** Commit to screen free Saturdays during May.

**May Call to Action for Early Childhood Providers:** Use this time in quarantine to participate in YWCA/ FORWARD Healthy Living Training on ZOOM.

For information on healthy eating and activity initiatives in DuPage, check out [www.forwarddupage.org](http://www.forwarddupage.org).