



Screen time: How much is too much?

With children today learning to swipe iPads before they can tie their shoes, parents can find themselves in knots when deciding how much screen time is right for their kids.

In the 21st century, staying on top of a child's access to technology has become tremendously difficult. Over 75 per cent of children can access mobile devices today, and many families interact with multiple phones, tablets, TVs or computers at the same

time while at home. However, apps and programs have also given early childhood educators and parents a large range of new tools to facilitate early learning and literacy in children.

Experts say the key is moderation, and in understanding that technology is a tool – not a replacement for adult supervision, guidance and interaction in early learning.

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends limiting screen time for

children to less than two hours a day, and preventing children under two from using mobile devices entirely. When devices are being used by children, parents are encouraged to focus on apps and programs which promote literacy development, creativity (free play) or skill development.

At Family Day, we are incorporating technology into our programs to enhance learning by involving staff, children and their families. In our child care programs, tablets are used to capture moments throughout a child's daily routines. These moments can be shared with parents, and are used to build on a child's learning.

These devices have also been used as interactive teaching tools for the children. With guidance and support from staff, children have used the devices to conduct research on topics which spark their interest. They have also been used to help children write scripts for plays, and then to film their performance. We have been able to capture and reflect on skills children have demonstrated such as self-confidence, social skills and literacy abilities gained during the actual performance. As a portal to a nearly infinite supply of digital books, staff have used electronic devices for storytelling with children, helping them gain valuable communications, language and early literacy skills.

And children are not the only ones learning through these devices. Through photos and videos, centre staff can provide parents with a glimpse of their child's day in the hours
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continued from page one... between pickup and drop off. This has been very reassuring for new families transitioning children to our programs.

At the same time, Program Consultants and Supervisors use videos of children to share teaching techniques and child/staff interactions. By reviewing videos and photos of activities with children, staff are encouraged to analyze each child's development, and then to collectively strategize ways of further scaffolding each child's learning experience as they create the next day's programming.

More information on the role of technology in early learning and literacy can be found on our website, www.familydaycare.com, in the Early Literacy section under "programs." There, you will also find informational webinars hosted by Family Day's Early Literacy Specialists for parents and early childhood educators.

When selecting an app or program, parents are encouraged to first consider whether it is:

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Right for your child's stage and interests
- ✓ Potentially interactive
- ✓ Providing positive feedback
- ✓ Positively promoting learning

Most importantly, parental support is really important – parents play a key role in guiding and promoting learning and early literacy using technology.



Message from Joan Arruda, CEO

Welcome to 2016! The world of early learning and child care continues to evolve and transform with another set of regulation changes potentially arriving from the provincial government over the next couple of months. Family Day continues to work through the previous regulation changes for both our licensed home child care programs, and for our centre-based child care and school age programs. Through all this, our goal continues to be that of maintaining excellent program quality, and ensuring that children and families enjoy the programming they attend.

I encourage staff and families to keep an eye on announcements around early learning and care at the national level. Encourage your federal members of

Parliament to think about support for families who need to access child care. Clearly, in these difficult economic times, the government may take a more measured approach, however, a national strategy on early learning and care in Canada is long overdue and necessary for families balancing multiple priorities. Strong commitment from the federal government will enhance



funding in Ontario and improve access to affordable, regulated child care in this province.

Finally, a special thank you goes to our staff in all three regions for your valuable contributions to the United Way of Toronto and York Region, and the United Way of Peel Region. Within the agency, a record 75 per cent of our staff participated by making donations through payroll deductions. With the support from families through our Dance Day for the United Way of Toronto and York Region, and many other events, all of you have made a lasting impact in the communities in which we serve.

Thank you all.

Joan

Annual parent survey is coming your way!

Our annual parent survey will be launched online in June 2016, and we encourage families to participate and share their feedback with us.



Raffle drums, bowling balls to roll in support of Family Day

Join in the fun and you can win big!

A pair of popular Family Day fundraisers is now underway, and with a bit of luck you can win big!

Each of our centres has formed a bowling team, which is now raising funds to take part in the agency's fifth annual Bowling for Family Day event on Saturday, April 23, 2016, in both Peel Region and York Region.

Also, Family Day is holding raffles in centres at Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, Markham and Richmond Hill. Buy a ticket, and you can win one of three amazing prizes:

- **An Xbox One console with Kinect** – keep the whole family active!
- **One \$200 gift card to Magenta portrait studios** – perfect for a professional family portrait!
- **Four tickets to Ripley's Aquarium Toronto (two adults, one youth, one child)** – a fun, fish-filled family outing!

Tickets are \$3 each (**cash only**), and will be sold until end of day, **Tuesday, March 29**. They will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Quantities are limited, so don't delay! Please see your Centre Supervisor or staff to buy tickets. The draw for winners will be conducted in the second week of April 2016, with the winners announced shortly afterward.

Both these fundraisers will support Family Day's programming and resources for children. You can help out by purchasing raffle tickets, making a donation or a pledge to support a centre's bowling team, or by asking your employer to make a donation.

Good luck!



Registration now open for 2016 summer camps



Summer's just around the corner, and registration is now open for Family Day's summer camp programs. To register your child for our extended-day and school-age camp programs, please visit www.familydaycare.com and click on the home page link to summer camps. Spots are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so register your children as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

We raised well over \$20k for our communities!

This year, Family Day's staff and families came together to raise over \$23,000 for the United Way of Toronto and York Region, and the United Way of Peel Region. Pledges and donations poured in from all corners of the agency, and Family Day was able to field its largest-ever team for the annual United Way CN Tower Climb charity event. Thank you all for your generosity and hard work!



United Way
Toronto & York Region

Parent Advisory meetings

Family Day's parent advisory meetings are coming up this spring. The meetings are a great opportunity to find out more about your child's program, and to speak with staff about the services that Family Day offers. Meeting dates will be posted at your centre in the coming weeks.



New outdoor play training a breath of fresh air for home caregivers

With the recognition that ongoing learning is critical to quality programming in our home child care program, we will begin our 2016 Caregiver Training Series with a focus on the importance of outdoor play. Other professional learning opportunities will focus on communication and documentation, Programming for all age groups, guiding children's behaviour, and proper food handling. We hope to have an informative and engaging series for our caregivers.



Get counted, or even get hired for the 2016 Census!

Canada's 2016 census will take place on May 10, 2016. Everybody living in Canada is counted during the census, and the information gathered helps the federal government plan and make

decisions which may affect your community. It is mandatory for everyone to participate in the census.

The census also offers a number of short-term, part-time jobs. For more information, please visit www.census.gc.ca



FAMILY DAY



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Our Programs

- Licensed Home Child Care
- Child Care Centres
- School Age Programs
- Resource Programs
- Ontario Early Years Centres in Toronto East, York Region and the Region of Peel

Family Day Focus Newsletter

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For countless families, Family Day is the only way!