

Purposeful Screen Time

Slide #1 Welcome

Welcome to this course titled, ***“Purposeful Screen Time”***.

This course is developed as part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) alignment process, to prepare providers and licensors in their understanding of the “why”, the “what” and the “how” of complying with the updated Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs (referred to in each course as the Foundational Quality Standards).

Slide #2 Helpful Hints

WA DCYF is pleased to present this e-Learning course! To help provide a positive learning experience for you, please take a moment to review the following “Helpful Hints” summary, detailing what you can expect from this course. A complete listing of Helpful Hints has been added to the Resources section of your learner’s screen for reference.

- If you would like to access and review the full course text, please visit the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can view, print, or download a full version of the course text that is narrated within each module. The full text will be included in each course and listed as the first resource in the Resources section of your course frame.
- The time to complete the course will depend on the course topic and the pace at which you advance through the slides.
- To help you get the most out of the course, settings are in place to prevent users from skipping ahead through the slides. You can advance through the course when the narration for each slide concludes by selecting the “Next” button, or, go back to review material already presented by selecting the “Previous” button.
- Web links and additional resources will be utilized in some of the courses to enhance your learning experience. We hope you will take time to explore them to further develop your knowledge about the topics being presented.

Slide #3 Course Introduction

This course is designed to introduce you to the updated Washington Administrative Code or WAC, as well as outline strategies and examples of WAC compliance. WACs will be detailed in each course as a reference and a full listing of the WAC is included in the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can print or download this resource at any time, either as a reference while you complete this course, or as a resource after the course is completed.

Slide #4 Learning Outcomes

This course will help early learning professionals understand how to meet, assess for, and demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Foundational Quality Standards.

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Recognize when to use screen time with children in care
- Identify examples of purposeful screen time
- Understand how to develop strategies for using screen time as an effective learning tool for children

Slide #5 Guiding Principles

As we cover the material in this course, please keep in mind the following Guiding Principles. We will revisit these at the end of the course to “check in” with you and give you an opportunity to assess your understanding and application of the course content.

Guiding Principles:

- Young children learn best from real-life interactions with people and objects, rather than media
- Screen time can be a valuable educational tool to help children grow and learn when used appropriately
- Purposeful screen time is meant to be an interactive activity where early learning providers and children in care, older than 2 years of age, actively engage together with media to build real-world connections and knowledge

Slide #6 Terms and Definitions

Take a moment to review and familiarize yourself with the following terms and definitions. For your reference, a listing of these terms has been added to the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can access the list at any time by visiting the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can download the file to keep as a future reference or print as a desk guide.

Developmentally appropriate means:

- (1) An early learning provider interacts with each child in a way that recognizes and respects the child's chronological and developmental age;
- (2) Knowledge about how children grow and learn;
- (3) Reflects the developmental level of the individual child; and
- (4) Interactions and activities are planned with the developmental needs of the individual child in mind.

Early learning professionals are all early learning providers, child care licensing staff, and other professionals in the early learning field.

Screen time means watching, using, or playing television, computers, video games, video or DVD players, mobile communication devices, or similar devices.

RCW means Revised Code of Washington.

WAC means Washington Administrative Code.

Slide #7 Screen Time Basics

Did you know:

- American children ages 0 to 8 use screen media for an average of 2 hours and 19 minutes each day¹?
- About 35 percent of children's screen time is spent with a mobile device in 2017, up from only 4 percent in 2011²?
- Children under the age of 3 years old are exposed to an average of 5.5 hours of background TV per day³?

Screens, whether a television, computer, tablet, or smart phone, are common fixtures in our world. According to the Pew Research Center, 90 percent of U.S. households contain at least one of these devices and an average household has five of them⁴!

Every experience a young child has affects their development; this includes the experiences a young child has with technology and screen time. To best support children's development, screen time must be used purposefully and appropriately, and with an understanding of how children will best benefit from exposure to screen time versus when screen time is detrimental to children's development.

Slide #8 Basics continued

Developmentally appropriate use of technology can help children grow and learn, especially when early learning providers play an active role. Like any other educational tool, including picture books, blocks, or art supplies, the way an early learning provider uses the tool in their early learning program will greatly impact the outcomes of children in their care.

¹ Rasmussen, E. (2017, Oct. 19). Screen Time and Kids: Insights from a New Report. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2017/10/screen-time-kids-insights-new-report/>

² Rasmussen, E. (2017, Oct. 19). Screen Time and Kids: Insights from a New Report. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2017/10/screen-time-kids-insights-new-report/>

³ Barr, R., McClure, E., & Parlakian, R. (2018). What the Research Says About the Impact of Media on Children Aged 0-3 Years Old. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2536-what-the-research-says-about-the-impact-of-media-on-children-aged-0-3-years-old>

⁴ Pew Research Center. (2017, May 25). A third of Americans live in a household with three or more smartphones. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/25/a-third-of-americans-live-in-a-household-with-three-or-more-smartphones/>

Section 110-300-0155 is included in WAC to provide guidance on how to purposefully use screen time as an educational tool to benefit a child's development. This guidance draws from the research and recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition, National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs- Caring for Our Children.

Slide #9 Basics continued

Screen time use should never displace the role of unstructured, unplugged, interactive, and creative play that research indicates is the best way children learn.

Early learning providers should keep in mind the developmental levels of children when using screens for early learning.

They should consider what is best for healthy child development and then consider how screens can help achieve learning outcomes. It should be used for learning and meeting developmental objectives, which can include being used as a tool during play. This will support children in transferring the content from the screen to the real world.

Slide #10 WAC 110-300-0155

Let's begin reviewing Section 110-300-0155.

WAC 110-300-0155 Use of television, video, and computers.

If an early learning provider offers screen time to children in care:

(1) The screen time available for each child:

- (a) Must be educational, developmentally and age appropriate, nonviolent, and culturally sensitive; and**
- (b) Should be interactive with staff.**

Slide # 11 WAC 110-300-0155

This section of WAC begins with the word "if". Screen time is not a mandatory educational tool to be used in all early learning programs. However, if an early learning program employs screen time, the following subsections outline the requirements to make screen time a purposeful educational tool for *each* child.

Subsection (1) states that if screen time is used appropriately, it must be available for *each* child. It should not be used as a "reward" for "well-behaving" children or "revoked" as a punishment for "misbehaving" children. As an educational tool, all children should have equal access to screen time.

Slide #12 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

Let's focus on the requirements of subsection (1)(a) which describe the characteristics of purposeful screen time.

Explore the components of purposeful screen time by selecting each description.

- **Educational:** Not all children's programming is educational or valuable for young children. Well-designed children's shows can have a positive effect on a child's development, and improve the cognitive, literacy, and social outcomes for children⁵. Search for programs where characters occasionally speak directly to children and they ask children to participate in some way (such as repeating a word).
- **Developmentally and Age Appropriate:** Just as a chapter book would not be developmentally or age appropriate for a preschool aged child, some shows or games are too advanced in content for young children to understand. For example, an app where children are asked to complete words by finding missing letters may be appropriate for a 5 year old who is learning their letters and to read simple words in kindergarten, but may be frustrating for a 3 year old who has only begun recognizing the letter his name begins with. When selecting shows or games for screen time, it is important to consider the developmental stage of those watching.
- **Nonviolent:** Exposure to violent content on TV causes an increase in sleep problems in children 3 to 5 years⁶. Violent content can distress young children who, because they are still developing their symbolic understanding, may have difficulty distinguishing what is "real versus pretend" on a screen.
- **Culturally Sensitive:** Content used in screen time should be inclusive and representative of the children and families in the early learning program. Screen time is an educational tool to help children make connections in the real world, and the world in which we live includes many diverse cultures.

Slide #13 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

Now, let's focus on the requirement of subsection (1)(b) which states the screen time must be interactive with staff. Young children learn best from hands-on experiences with people they care about⁷. While it is easy for adults to watch content on a screen, make

⁵ Radesky, J. & Christakis, D. (2016, November). Media and Young Minds. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>

⁶ Barr, R., McClure, E., & Parlakian, R. (2018). What the Research Says About the Impact of Media on Children Aged 0-3 Years Old. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2536-what-the-research-says-about-the-impact-of-media-on-children-aged-0-3-years-old>

⁷ Zero to Three. (2009, February 16). Television and the Under 3 Crowd. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/149-television-and-the-under-3-crowd>

sense of it, and apply it to real life, this is a skill which must be taught and modeled for young children.

The value of real life interactions with people and objects cannot be underestimated for young learners. Early learning providers are responsible for helping children make sense of what they see and draw meaningful connections from the screen to the real world. These interactions make the screen time purposeful and meaningful for children.

Slide #14 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

There are several strategies for early learning providers to make screen time interactive and support children in making connections to the real world. These strategies include⁸:

- **Talking about the program or game:** Asking children open-ended questions can help children process their thoughts about what they've just seen. For example: "Did you like the grandma in the story?" or "How did you feel when the puppy got lost in the show?"
- **Answering children's questions:** This helps them make sense of the content to which they are being exposed. Take the time to respond to all questions, even if it means pausing the show or game, or the answer to the question seems obvious. In some cases, children are needing affirmation to reinforce their understanding of new concepts. For example: If the child asks, "Are they digging in the dirt to plant a seed?", a reinforcing response might be "Yes, the gardener is using the shovel to dig up the dirt and plant a seed. I wonder what will grow. What do you think will grow?"
- **Pointing out objects on the screen and naming them:** This helps children make sense of new objects and reinforce what the object is, while also building vocabulary. For example: "That big machine is a bulldozer. The construction has started!"
- **Being physically active while using a screen:** For example: Dance along to music that is played, or move like the animals on the screen.
- **Making connections to a child's "real life":** This helps children make the connection of what they are learning and what they already know. For example: "That is a cat! Do you have a cat at your house?" or "This is a puzzle app. We get to complete the puzzle on the tablet, just like when we do wooden puzzles during free time".

⁸ Zero to Three. (2009, February 16). Television and the Under 3 Crowd. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/149-television-and-the-under-3-crowd>

- **When the show is over, acting it out or putting a skill into use:** For example: “That was a neat show about trains. Let’s get out our train set and build our own track like it was in the show!”

Slide #15 Test Your Learning!

Before we continue, let’s assess your learning.

Which of the following strategies can be used to help children make sense of new concepts from their exposure to screen time, and connect the knowledge to the real world? Please select all that apply.

- A. When a child asks a question about what is happening on the screen, you don’t respond so the child can figure it out on their own.
- B. When the TV program is over, turn the TV off and act out the story with the children using puppets.
- C. When children play a game on a screen, ask them to tell you about how to be successful in the game.
- D. When a young child wants to get up during a TV program, direct the child to sit down because they must stay still during the entire program.

Slide #16 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

WAC 110-300-0155 Use of television, video, and computers.

(2) Children must not be required to participate in screen time activities. Alternative activities must be provided to children in care when screen time is offered.

Just as alternative activities are offered to children when they choose not to participate in napping or other structured activities throughout the day, children must be offered an alternative activity during screen time activities.

Some children may simply not be interested in participating in screen time. In these instances, it is important that children have access to other engaging activities to support the day’s learning goals and objectives.

Slide #17 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

WAC 110-300-0155 Use of television, video, and computers.

(3) Screen time must not occur during scheduled meals or snacks.

Meal time and snack time is a great opportunity to foster language development and social engagement between children in the early learning program. Screen time during meal time takes away the opportunity for children to work on these important developmental skills.

Eating while watching TV or engaging in screen time can also establish unhealthy physical habits. When children (and adults) eat while watching TV or using screens, their attention to the screen causes diminished attention to their bodies' cues telling them they are hungry or full. This means children's attention is so focused on making sense of what is happening on the screen, they pay less attention to their bodies' internal signals, which can cause children to over-eat or under-eat⁹.

To build healthy eating habits and to allow early learning providers and children to actively engage in the screen time together, screen time must not occur during scheduled meals or snacks. This aligns with the standards in Caring for Our Children standard 2.2.0.3.

Slide #18 Test Your Learning!

Before we continue, let's assess your learning. Review the statement and choose the letter that represents the correct answer.

- Eating meals in front of a screen can cause children to_____.
- A. Pay more attention to their bodies internal signals.
 - B. Pay less attention to their bodies internal signals.

⁹ Radesky, J. & Christakis, D. (2016, November). Media and Young Minds. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591> and Birch, L. & Francis, L. (2006, April). Does Eating during Television Viewing Affect Preschool Children's Intake? Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2596580/>

Slide #19 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

WAC 110-300-0155 Use of television, video, and computers.

(4) Total screen time must not exceed two and one-half hours per week for each child over twenty-four months of age through preschool in full-day care (one and one-quarter hours per child in half-day care).

(5) For school-age children, screen time must be limited to two and one-half hours per week for each child unless computer use is required for homework or a part of curriculum.

Subsection (4) limits total screen time for preschool age children in full time care to 2 ½ hours per week. This could be averaged out to 30 minutes per day.

Slide #20 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

This is more than the standard set by Caring for our Children of 30 minutes per week, as DCYF recognizes screen time can be an effective educational tool when guidance of this section is followed. Yet the screen time allowance is less than the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics of 1 hour per day; this is because children may be exposed to screen time during the hours they are not in care at an early learning program.

An example of how early learning providers can ensure they are not exceeding the allowed amount of time, is by having the computer or tablet available to children during certain times of the day and using a timer to let the child know when their turn is up.

Another method to ensure the allowed amount of time is not exceeded is by including screen time on the daily schedule. For example, an early learning provider could include on their daily schedule 15 minutes to show an educational video.

For school age children, extra allowance is made for use of computer screen time required for homework or as part of curriculum. Subsection (5) acknowledges screen time is meant to be used as an educational tool and provides allowance for this extended use for older children.

Slide #21 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

WAC 110-300-0155 Use of television, video, and computers.

(6) There must not be intentional screen time for children under twenty-four months of age. An infant or toddler must be redirected from an area where screen time is displayed.

Following the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, intentional screen time is not allowed for children under 2 years of age.

For infants and toddlers, their symbolic, memory, and attentional skills are at such an early stage of development, they are unable to learn well from screens¹⁰. Not only does screen time hold very little meaning for infants and toddlers, several studies also show it can be detrimental to their development. These studies found the more television an infant or toddler was exposed to, the poorer the language outcomes, attention, and executive function skills as the child grew¹¹.

Slide #22 WAC 110-300-0155 continued

In order to best support the healthy growth and development of infants and toddlers, intentional screen time is prohibited.

Subsection (6) specifies against *intentional* screen time for infants and toddlers. In some early learning programs where there are mixed age groups, like family home environments, toddlers may wander into the space where older children are using a tablet or watching television. In this case, the toddler must be directed away from the screen. For non-mobile infants, this may mean intentionally positioning or playing with the infant in a place where the infant cannot see the screen, but the early learning provider can still observe and engage with children who are using screen time.

Another way to manage this requirement might be to structure the day so older children have access to screen time while infants or toddlers are sleeping. Several studies show exposure to background TV sounds, even if the infant cannot see the screen, interferes with the amount of time an infant plays with toys and the length of time the infant will focus their attention¹².

Slide #23 Test Your Learning!

Before we finish this course, let's assess your learning! Choose the correct answer on the following slides which covers the course material we just learned.

¹⁰ Radesky, J. & Christakis, D. (2016, November). Media and Young Minds. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>

¹¹ Hanson, K. (2017). The Influence of Early Media Exposure on Children's Development and Learning. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1961&context=dissertations_2

¹² Evans Schmidt, M., Pempek, T., Kirkorian, H., Frankenfield Lund, A., & Anderson, D. (2008, July). The Effects of Background Television on the Toy Play Behavior of Very Young Children. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23185023_The_Effects_of_Background_Television_on_the_Toy_Play_Behavior_of_Very_Young_Children

Review the scenarios and decide if the use of screen time in the early learning program is purposeful. If needed, refer to the Guiding Principles to help you make your decision.

An early learning provider uses a tablet to show preschool age children a video on how to make a simple pattern. When the video is over, she says, "Let's get out our beads and practice making a pattern like they did in the video." Is this a purposeful use of screen time?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Slide #24 Test Your Learning!

An early learning program opens at 6:30am and the first few children who are dropped off are still waking up. To ease them into the morning, the early learning provider turns on a movie, so the children can have some "quiet time". This gives the early learning provider a chance to finish prepping materials before other children arrive. Is this a purposeful use of screen time?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Slide #25 Test Your Learning!

Review this statement and select if the statement is true or false.

Screen time is a strong educational tool to use with children of all ages.

- A. True
- B. False

Research shows infants and toddlers learn very little from screen time and should be shielded from screen time whenever possible. Infant and toddler brains are made stronger within the context of social relationship and warm, responsive interactions which cannot be provided through screen time. Even children older than 2 years old can have difficulty learning from screen media if the content is not developmentally appropriate and there is not an adult to help them relate the screen content to the real world.

Please visit the Resources section of your learner's screen for additional resources related to television, video, computers and children.

Slide #26 Guiding Principles

This concludes the content portion of this course! Thank you for your participation!

Before this course ends, please take a moment to reflect and set personal goals related to the following Guiding Principles and ways that each of the principles relate to early learning professionals.

Guiding Principles:

- Young children learn best from real-life interactions with people and objects, rather than media
- Screen time can be a valuable educational tool to help children grow and learn when used appropriately
- Purposeful screen time is meant to be an interactive activity where early learning providers and children in care, older than 2 years of age, actively engage together with media to build real-world connections and knowledge

What take-a-ways do you have? How will you change your practices as a result of participation in this learning module?

Slide #27 End of Course

This concludes this course. If you have questions following this session, please contact your supervisor or licenser.

We hope this course has been helpful in providing information about the WAC and how programs can meet the new standards with compliance.

Our goal is that all early learning professionals viewing this course have left with an increased understanding and knowledge of the updated WAC, and that you will be able to either assess programs for compliance or be able to maintain and demonstrate compliance.