

## POSITIVE ACTIVITIES:

### Lesson 2: Limit screen time – what to do instead!



Sitting passively in front of a screen stops children using their natural energy for however long that may be. This energy builds up and will need releasing at some point. It means that children often misbehave afterwards if there isn't time to release all the pent-up energy.

Dr Montessori always emphasised children's innate needs for real-life *EXPLORATION* and *DISCOVERY* in order to create their personality and understanding of the world:

- *"The hand is the tool of the mind..."*
- *"What the hand does, the mind remembers..."*
- *"Never give to the mind more than you give to the hand."*

**Create a gentle schedule together to limit daily screen time:**

- Maybe you need 20 minutes rest after lunch or before the bedtime routine?
- Keep it consistent to avoid arguments about what to watch and when.
- Choose a programme that is age-appropriate and teaches something interesting about our amazing world.
- Afterwards, help your child return to using their innate creativity and imagination. Help them reach their potential for refined body co-ordination with REAL-LIFE activities.

**When children watch and listen to fast-changing music videos, DVDs or TV programmes, their brains cannot filter the visual and auditory content and so they become entranced:**

- It looks like they are concentrating but in fact the brain has slowed right down and is hardly engaged at all.
- When the screen and sound are switched off, children have extreme responses of either lethargy or hyperactivity depending on their individual character.
- Screen time for little children is not recommended.

**It is much better to keep things simple. Try these alternatives:**

- Dancing to music on Spotify, iTunes, CDs and radio or podcasts (sound only)
- Singing without any accompanying music
- Tuned and percussive instruments
- Books and audiobooks, stories and poems
- Verbal stories made up together
- Action songs, Singing and response games
- Puzzles and games
- Art and craft
- Threading, lacing and cutting for collages
- Cooking and baking
- Outdoor play and experiences

**These are proven to be more effective ways of learning because they allow children to concentrate and repeat as many times as they would like:**

- The brain is built on repetition, but TV and screens go from one scene to the next very quickly and don't allow children to process information properly.

- Children's brains need slow, consistent repetition to assimilate information (like a favourite story repeated again and again, or how many times they fall down and get up again before learning to walk).

**Reflections:**

- Do you have a regular screen time routine?
- Are there changes you need to make to avoid arguments or negative behaviour afterwards?
- Which of the alternative ideas above can you commit to trying today?

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