

# Michigan Child Care Matters

Department of  
Human Services

ISSUE 83, WINTER 2009  
MEDIA IN CHILD CARE

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

As a child care provider, you know how important your interactions with children are. Licensing underscores the importance of your relationship with children in both home and center rules. In homes, R 400.1014(1) requires caregivers to “engage in positive interactions with children.” Both home and center rules reference the need to promote children’s social-emotional development. A supportive environment and frequent, positive interactions between caregivers and children are essential for the healthy development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

One significant barrier to frequent and positive adult/child interactions is electronic media (TV, videos and DVDs, and computers). The American Academy of Pediatrics takes a very strong stand on children and electronic media:

*“Children of all ages are constantly learning new things. The first 2 years of life are especially important in the growth and development of your child’s brain. During this time, children need good, positive interaction with other children and adults. Too much television can negatively affect early brain development. . . . Until more research is done about the effects of TV on very young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend television for children age 2 or younger.”*

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension publishes *Family Issues Facts*, a bulletin on issues related to children. Bulletin #4100, “How Television Viewing Affects Children,” has information

that all caregivers should be aware of. Instead of watching television, they suggest activities that involve interactions, reading, and playing to promote the healthy development of social, emotional, and intellectual skills:

**Explore.** Baby-proof an entire room and put an assortment of toys and safe household objects in the room to play with.

**Watch.** Hang a bird feeder outside a window where the child can see the birds and squirrels.

**Listen.** Play music at a moderate volume and encourage your child to sing and dance.

**Touch.** Toddlers like to dig, scoop, and mold, exercising their emerging fine motor skills. Provide some play dough or a bowl half filled with beans, and cups for scooping.

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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
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This publication provides relevant information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care, or to provide them with the Web address so they may receive their own copy. Most issues are available at the Child Care Licensing Web page:

[www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare)

**Look at Books.** Read a book or just look at the pictures with your child. Try to have some books that are unfamiliar so they will hold your child's attention.

**Bag it.** Let your child unpack and repack a suitcase or tote bag with toys or safe household items.

**Help.** Since toddlers like to be where the action is, let them play alongside you while you work. Think creatively about how your child can help you with a task.

As with many things, when used intentionally and in moderation, television has the potential to be a powerful learning tool. This issue of Michigan Child Care Matters will provide you with information to assist you in using electronic media wisely. ❖

James S. Sinnamon, Director  
Child Care Licensing Division

## Playground Inspections

Effective December 8, 2008, child care centers are required to demonstrate compliance with R400.5117(7). Below is a list of the information that must be included in a center's records/documentation to show compliance with this subrule:

- A statement from the certified playground inspector that the outdoor play area complies with the guidelines of the 1997 edition of the Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
- Name of certified playground inspector.
- Name of certifying organization (NPSI, NPPS, etc.).
- Signature of the certified inspector.
- Certification number of the inspector.
- Expiration date of inspector's certification.

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND TELEVISION

Erika Bigelow, Former Licensing Consultant  
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Television is a source of entertainment and education. Television programs are designed for persons of all ages, from infancy through adulthood. Experts in the field of infant/young toddler brain development have voiced concern about infant/young toddler exposure to television, citing possible hindrance to brain development.

Research shows that brain development begins within the first months after conception and continues to age five, extending to age 10. In the months following conception, the brain and spinal cord form. By the sixth prenatal month, almost all of the neurons necessary for the mature brain are present. The neurons form and quickly become differentiated for their specialized roles. They form synapses, or connections, with other neurons throughout childhood. These connections are made through experiences infants/young toddlers have with the environment. As the brain continues to develop, the connections are either activated and retained or discarded from the brain. Because of this principal, researchers believe that the building blocks of the developing brain are dependent on stimulation, experience, and relationships infants/young toddlers have with people, especially caregivers.

Research has also shown that the brain has optimal periods for development. During these periods, the brain is most receptive for learning, making it easier to learn specific tasks. Once the optimal period has passed, learning new tasks is more difficult.

From birth to approximately two years of age, and extending through 10 years, children learn their primary language. For optimal language growth, caregivers should regularly sing and speak to infants/young toddlers. During this time, the caregiver is looking directly at the infant/young toddler's face



and into their eyes. Language development is also promoted when “parentese” is used, the sing-song method that many caregivers use when speaking to infants/young toddlers.

From birth to approximately four years of age, visual development is occurring. Infants/young toddlers need to see shapes, objects and colors. The brain is also developing motor coordination, so infants/young toddlers need stimulating activities to help them roll, crawl and reach for objects.

Through the course of development, research shows that infants/young toddlers prefer the appearance of human faces to other sights, and the sound of human voices to other sounds. They respond to social stimuli. They are interested in sights, speech and sounds as they interpret and understand facial expressions, language and behavior. The daily and sensitive, face-to-face interactions caregivers have with infants/young toddlers promotes brain development and learning.

In an effort to promote infant/young toddler growth and development, some caregivers may turn to television. Many programs are now developed which advertise the ability to increase cognitive and language development, and strengthen the bond between infant/young toddler and caregiver.

Despite the positive proclamations made about infant/young toddler programming, research shows otherwise. Television does not provide the direct interaction that is required for optimal brain development; rather, it is a passive activity. Brain and language development are dependent on interactions between caregivers and infants/young toddlers and infants/young toddlers are not able to interact with the television. Many studies have found that language development is hin-

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## A RISK TO SCHOOL READINESS?

### Media and Its Impact on Our Children

Jacqueline Wood, Retired Early Childhood Education Consultant  
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Reprinted from MCCM Issue 79, Fall 2007

The programs you watched as a child are very different from what children are watching today. Today's programs are much more violent and graphic than anything you watched as a child.

While the programs in the past may have contained violence, generally the violence was committed by the "bad" guys with the "good" guys working to find ways to resolve the conflict without further violence. The messages that were taught to children and adults included violence is to be avoided and stopped; justice and fairness were the goal; and other ways of solving conflict should be used. The images you saw led your mind to imagine a scene—the music became more intense, a shadowy figure approached, the sounds of violence were followed by a still form. The actual occurrence of the violent act was rarely shown.

Today's scenes and messages are very different. Two thirds of all U.S. TV programming contains violence with 60 percent of children's programming containing violence. Media images repeatedly show torture, damaged bodies with fuzzied out faces, bombed out cars and markets, blood pools, and "bad" guys attacking for no apparent reason. In the last 24 years, American television has become the most violent television programming in the world. Messages taught to our children indicate that violence is necessary, justifiable, and inevitable. It is fun, exciting, and funny, with the aggressor being rewarded for committing violent acts. The "good" guys now commit as much violence as the "bad" guys. Female characters are now violent.

Commercial messages have also increased greatly since you were young. In the past, we watched one to two commercials every 15 minutes to now four minutes of commercials for every 5 minutes of program content. The 7-14 ads children will watch during a four-minute commercial break generally contain violence, directions to go to online websites, encouragement to buy violent toys, and to eat unhealthy foods.

If you listen closely to the ads and the programming, they also have messages to discredit or disregard adults. The following comments are a sampling of the messages given to children during two Saturday mornings on children's TV:

- "It's aliens!! Oh no, it is just adults."
- "For kids only. No adults allowed."
- "No one can help you, not even your Mommy."
- "I didn't raise you to be a whiny coward. You didn't raise me. Mom did."
- "School isn't fun at all. Classes are boring. The halls are crowded. Lunch is awful."

*"EI" is a symbol that appears on the screen in the corner of the TV. This indicates the program meets the federal criteria for Educational and Informational Programming for children birth to 16 years of age. Each network that broadcasts digitally is to have 3 hours of EI programming a week.*

Many of these messages have nothing to do with the story line or the ad's product. Instead they are slipped in as a single statement in the middle of other content.

Media and its effect on today's children is further compounded by the amount of exposure children now have. Children can view TV programming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Media is also available online and through cell phones and DVDs. Infants now have their own TV network with programming especially designed to capture and hold the attention of babies as young as three months. Thirty percent of all infants and toddlers have a TV in their bedroom. Infants under a year of age can operate the remote control to turn on the TV and change the channels, including during the middle of the night.

So, how much TV are our children watching?

- Infants are now watching media 7-14 hours a week.
- Toddlers are watching an average of 21 hours a week.
- Preschoolers and schoolage children are watching an average of 28 hours a week.
- Children in poverty often average 49 hours a week.

These amounts do not include the additional time spent watching DVDs and playing video or computer games. By the time children are six years old, they will have spent more time watching TV than they will spend talking to their father in their lifetime. Studies have shown that by the time a child finishes 6th grade, he or she will have seen 8,000 murders and a million acts of violence just on children's programming. This does not include what a child sees on adult programming.

Children spend more time watching media than they spend in the school classroom, interacting with adults, playing outside, being read to or reading on their own. Sleeping is the only activity that takes more time. Time with media is time not spent doing all of the things we know are needed for healthy development — playing, running, reading, drawing, imagining and being creative, solving problems and interacting with others.

Parents believe that TV shows are educational and that they help children's learning according to a recent study by the Kaiser Foundation. The American Academy of Pediatrics also recently found that 70 percent of child care centers use TV on a regular basis with children. While child care homes weren't included in these surveys, chances are strong that TV is also part of the children's day in this type of care, given that media is now such a large part of our culture.

Children do learn from media. The question is, "what they are learning?" We know from surveys that parents and caregivers rarely, if ever, sit and watch TV with children to see what is actually being taught. Instead, TV is used to occupy children's time so the adult can do something else, as a reward or punishment, to calm children, put them to sleep, etc.

Research has repeatedly shown the negative effects of children watching today's media can include:

- Increased meanness and aggressive behavior, including bullying.
- Attention difficulties related to attention deficit and hyper activity.
- Decreased school performance.
- Fewer problem-solving skills.
- Decreased sensitivity and empathy towards others.
- Poor body image.
- Obesity.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Language delay.
- Loss of critical developmental experiences young children need.

Children who are the most vulnerable to media exposure are children under seven years of age, boys, children who live in violent homes and neighborhoods, and children who spend a lot of time with media.

The positive effects of media programming come only from quality educational programming that is watched by the age of child it was designed to reach. Even given that, the research shows developmental gains are primarily in the area of language and vocabulary development. For this to occur the program must have an age-appropriate sequenced curriculum that must be watched with an adult who can expand and explain the content throughout the day.

So what can each of us do to help children in a world full of media?

1. Look at our own use of media with children and in our programs.
2. Talk to families in your care about media and its impact on children.
3. Provide emotional support to parents who are limiting media exposure.
4. Allow no TV/DVD viewing for children less than two years of age.
5. Remove all TV/video viewing from bedrooms.
6. Stop using TV as a babysitter or as background noise.
7. Sit down and watch all programs with the children looking at it from the child's perspective.
8. Set a good example and limit our own TV watching.
9. Only allow children to watch "EI" programming and carefully screen the EI programming, as its messages can also be inappropriate for different aged children.
10. Build into children's daily activities that extend the positive messages found in many "EI" programs.
11. Restrict viewing of violent programs, including the news.
12. Talk to children about what they watched and how they feel about it.

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## ALTERNATIVES TO TELEVISION

Jessica Coates, Licensing Consultant  
Eaton County

Research has shown that children who watch too much television are more likely to be obese, have poor grades, sleep problems, behavior problems, and engage in risky behavior. Licensing rules prohibit more than two hours of television viewing per day in homes and require that homes and centers provide age appropriate media based on content and length.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children over the age of two watch only 1-2 hours of television per day and children under age two not watch television at all. Research has revealed that 51 percent of households have their television on “most” of the time. This makes it likely that children will far exceed the recommended television exposure for their age group. It then becomes even more important to greatly reduce or eliminate the amount of time children watch television while at child care.

Child care providers can achieve this goal by planning a daily program that includes varied and developmentally appropriate activities. When daily activities are planned in advance, television viewing is less likely to occur.

Licensing rules require daily programming that is both child and staff initiated and includes active and quiet play, group and individual activities, indoor and outdoor time, and large and small muscle development. Daily programs must also include science and math, at least 30 minutes of language and literacy experiences, and encourage imagination and creativity.

The first step to achieving this is creating a daily activity plan. Many resources exist to aid child care providers in this task. The Department of Early Education and Care in Massachusetts has developed an extensive resource guide to planning child care curriculum, which is available at [www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/TAFCCCurriculumGuide.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/TAFCCCurriculumGuide.pdf). The National Network for Child Care also has guidelines for planning activities in a child care setting, which is available at [www.nncc.org/Curriculum/planguide.html](http://www.nncc.org/Curriculum/planguide.html).

The children in care will determine the type and length of selected activities. Things to consider are age, individual developmental skills, and culture. Older children will generally spend more time on an activity than younger children. Several activities may need to be available at one time to allow those with a shorter attention span to move on to something else, while ensuring that those who are still interested in the activity can complete their task.

Once these factors are considered, the activities can be planned. It is great to have a set theme to base the activities on. Themes should last at least a week but not so long that the children become bored. Once a theme is selected, use a webbed planning guide to choose the activities. To do this, write the theme in the middle of a piece of paper and draw a circle around it. Draw lines branching out from the circle. Each line represents a different learning concept. The areas to include are art, science, math, active, individual, group, language, literacy, nutrition, music, imaginative play, etc. For each line drawn, brainstorm activities related to the theme that incorporates that specific learning concept.

Many resources exist to help child care providers find activities to include in a daily program plan. Libraries contain many books full of activity ideas. Some of these books will address appropriate ages and separate activities based on themes. The internet is an excellent resource for finding activity ideas.

Another great resource is craft stores. These stores sell craft kits which allow children to make something impressive without a lot of skill. Many of these stores also have free sample project sheets which highlight ways to use the supplies sold at the store.

The bottom line is that most children watch too much television. Child care providers can take the first step towards limiting the amount of television exposure the children in care receive by having a planned daily activity program. ❖

## ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER USE FOR PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

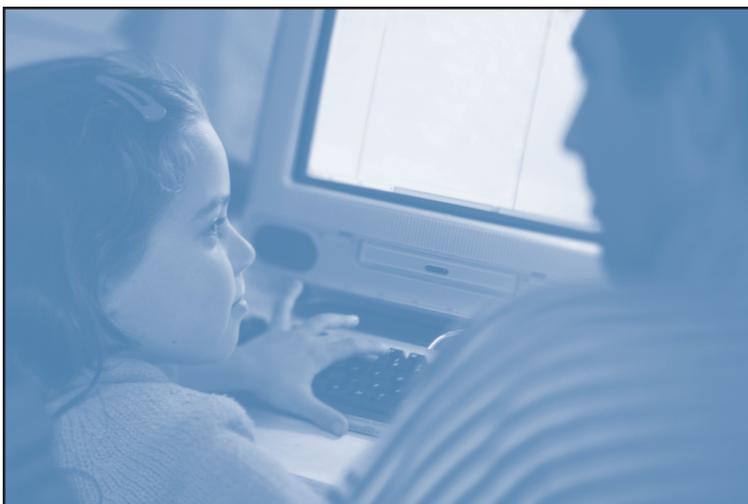
Jaclyn Caroffino, Licensing Consultant  
Jackson County

The use of computers in the child care setting is on the rise. According to the 2003 National Education Statistics, more than 65 percent of preschools and 80 percent of kindergartens use computers. The Kaiser Foundation found that almost half of US children ages six and under have already used a computer.

Children are attracted to computers because they experience a great deal of control. A child that is taught to turn on a computer and load an appropriate program feels success and accomplishment, which in turn builds that child's self esteem. However, introducing children to computers should not be done solely to build self esteem, but also to encourage learning as well.

There are four major types of educational software for pre-schoolers: drill and practice, tutorial, simple programming language, and simulation. Drill and practice programs ask a child a series of questions, and give immediate feedback based on the child's response. The tutorial teaches children the correct answers to questions using a drill and practice format. Programming language software involves a very simple command structure; a child uses only three or four commands to direct the computer to draw pictures on the monitor. The three types of software mentioned above help children with early literacy learning. Simulation software is designed to allow children to develop strategies to "outwit the computer", which helps with problem solving skills.

When shopping for preschool software, it is important to find programs that provide supportive feedback when the child is struggling. Look for short and simple activities to coincide with the preschooler's short attention span.



School-age children also benefit from computer use. Gains for kindergarten children include improved motor skills, enhanced mathematical thinking, increased creativity, increased scores on standardized language assessments, and an increased belief that they can affect their environment. Computers also enhance children's self concept, improve communication, and facilitate positive attitudes toward learning.

Software for school-age children should involve structured academic goals, such as knowing the alphabet, counting, adding, subtracting, etc. Multi-subject software is one way to achieve this goal.

Although age appropriate software is one way for children to use the computer, the internet is also available and accessible. However, understanding internet safety to protect children and enhance their learning environment is crucial.

School-age children may access the Internet to research school reports, communicate with teachers and other children, and play interactive games. All of these uses are wonderful resources for children. However, access to the internet can pose hazards to children. Providers must be aware of what children are seeing and hearing on the internet, who they meet, and what they share about themselves. Keep the lines of communication open with children to protect them from hidden dangers.

Chat rooms are another way for children and teens to utilize the internet. Chat rooms are set up according to interest or subject, such as a favorite TV show. Children may meet "friends" who are interested in exploiting them through the chat room. Many

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## MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARTOONS

Marcia Demski, Licensing Consultant  
Midland County

Cartoons are made to appeal to children, but contrary to public perception, not all of them are appropriate for children's viewing. Some cartoons average more than 80 violent acts per hour, exposing children to lots of bullying, belittling, fighting, falls from great heights, car chases, and other harmful activities. Research studies found this violence is often portrayed in a manner that increases the likelihood of negative effects on children. Over 33 percent of the violent cartoon scenes feature "bad" characters who are not punished; 70 percent show no remorse at the time the violence occurs; 40 percent include humor to make children think violence is funny; 50 percent of the violent incidents are lethal or incapacitating in "real life"; and 40 percent of the violence is perpetrated by attractive (hero) role models. The average American preschooler who watches mostly cartoons is exposed to 10,000 violent incidents per year. Researcher Dr. Barbara Wilson notes that "younger children have difficulty distinguishing televised fantasy from reality, and are at increased risk of imitating cartoon violence." Aletha Huston, Ph.D., found those children who watch the violent cartoons are "more likely to hit out at their playmates, argue, disobey class rules, leave tasks unfinished, and were less willing to wait for things" than those children who watch nonviolent programs.

To decide if a cartoon or animated movie is appropriate for children in care, find out how it is rated and if there are any content concerns. For example, *A Bug's Life* has 18 minutes of violence,

whereas *Dumbo* has only one minute, when he blows peanuts at the female elephants. If you are still unsure, watch the cartoon or animated movie before turning it on for the children. There are quality cartoons for children to view. For example, PBS offers *Cyberchase*, an animated series designed to engage children in the fun and challenge of math, with dazzling high-stakes adventure and humor (ages 8-11). It also offers *Dragon Tales*, an animated adventure series developed especially for preschool-age children. In the course of their adventures, Emmy, Max, and the dragons' help each other face fears and learn new ways to deal with problems they encounter (ages 2-6).

When children watch cartoon shows they are exposed to 7-14 advertisements during each four-minute commercial break. Children may watch an average of 19,000-20,000 advertisements each year. They are attracted to cartoon characters that are used to sell a product. Children are often exposed to violence, unhealthy foods, and derogatory statements about school, parents and adults. It is during commercial breaks that child care providers can do constructive activities, like standing up and doing stretching exercises, singing songs, discussing what will happen next in the show, or taking a break.

As child care providers, you have a responsibility to monitor all media programming for children in your care. Planning your daily program with a variety of activities, and using media sparingly is the best practice. ❖

### ***Need some alternatives to TV? CHECK THESE OUT!!!***

- [www.familycrafts.about.com](http://www.familycrafts.about.com)
- [www.kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.kids.nationalgeographic.com)
- [www.activityvillage.co.uk](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk)
- [www.dltk-kids.com](http://www.dltk-kids.com)
- [www.eec.state.ma.us/docsTAFCCCurriculumGuide.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docsTAFCCCurriculumGuide.pdf)
- [www.nccc.org/Curriculum/planguide.html](http://www.nccc.org/Curriculum/planguide.html)

**ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER USE****Cont. from page 7**

of these “friends” are actually predators who pose as children to obtain personal information such as addresses or phone numbers.

Many Internet service providers offer “parent-control options” to block certain material from coming into the computer. There are also “blockers” that prohibit access to certain sites.

Helpful tips to protect children using the Internet are:

- Block objectionable material.
- Keep the computer in a common area for monitoring its use.
- Bookmark favorite sites for easy access.
- Spend time online together.
- Block access to private chat rooms.
- Take the child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.
- Teach the child not to reveal personal information.
- Insist on being “introduced” if the child has a new online “friend”.

By implementing safe computer practices, and overseeing computer use, children can have a beneficial and successful computer experience. ❖

## AFTERSCHOOL TRAINING TOOLKIT

*This Web site has a number of research-based practices, sample lessons, video examples, and resources to support academic enrichment in afterschool.*

[http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/  
toolkits/](http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/)

**BRAIN DEVELOPMENT****Cont. from page 4**

dered for children that are exposed to media.

In 1999, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a recommendation that no child under two years of age should watch any television. The AAP stated: “Pediatricians should urge parents to avoid television viewing for children under the age of two years. Although certain television programs may be promoted to this age group, research on early brain development shows that babies and toddlers have a critical need for direct interactions with parents and other significant care givers (eg, child care providers) for healthy brain growth and the development of appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Therefore, exposing such young children to television programs should be discouraged.”

Brain development begins before birth and continues well after. The brain is shaped through children’s interactions with their environment. For children under the age of two years, having a caregiver who talks directly to them, sings to them, and interacts positively with them is of utmost importance for optimal brain development. ❖

## EXTENDING THE TV/VIDEO EXPERIENCE

Toni Stagray, Licensing Consultant  
Genesee County

It is no secret that today's children are watching more television. TV programming, video games, interactive games, and movies have a huge impact on children's lives and how they spend their time. To limit TV time child care providers must be creative and provide alternate daily activities for children. With a little research and some creativity, providers can turn the TV/Video experience into a learning opportunity.

Children need opportunities for the following: nurturing relationships with other children and adults, language development and conversation, problem solving, developing creativity by using their imagination and exploring their environment. TV and video games do not provide this. In addition, children need the opportunity to be physically active. Involving children in the decision process of "what to do" helps them to think creatively to come up with ideas for activities.

There are many books and activities that can offer positive learning experiences for children. With any age group of children, choosing books with a positive story line can extend the learning through activities. For example, the old Dr. Seuss classic, *Green Eggs and Ham*, is a fun, rhyming book that provides literacy and language development. After reading the book, green eggs and ham can be prepared and served for lunch. Think about other concepts children can learn from the use of books: learning colors, listening for rhyming words, nutrition and health, counting, color recognition, and more. It is important to offer books to children and to read to them, but there is so much more that can be done beyond this.

Ask yourself, "Besides reading this book, what else could I do with it?" "Besides sitting here and watching this video, what else can I learn from it?" Use the internet or your local library as a resource for extending the learning experience. Libraries provide a variety of books that can help you plan activities to coincide with a particular book. Ask the children's librarian in your community or attend a story hour with the children to obtain ideas. From less than one hour of searching the internet,

these resources were found using the search engine, Google.com.

**TIP:** Start with the name of a book, a favorite author, an idea, a food, or a character children watch on television, such as: *Dora the Explorer* (teaches Spanish); *Clifford the Big Red Dog*; *Arthur*; or *Curious George*, to name a few. When searching for Clifford books, the list produced more than 100 books, each with its own theme. For example, *Clifford's Big Day on the Farm* can be used to develop activities about farm life. Think of songs you learned in your own childhood about farms and teach them to the children. "Old MacDonald" certainly is a favorite! Make food that might be grown on a farm, offer dress-up clothes that go with the theme, and paint a box to make it look like a big red barn. Some providers even go as far as to plant a garden with the children in their care.

The following is just one example of how a theme or topic can be extended:

*Theme/Topic:* Apples / Applesauce

*Book:* *Rain Makes Applesauce*, by Marvin Bileck and Julian Scheer

*Description:* This is a favorite children's book, because it is nicely illustrated and each page ends with the phrase, "and rain make applesauce." The repetitive nature of the book is a "hook" for children as they begin to recite the rhyme with you. It offers "silly talk," which most young children love to do. Since it is a fun book, there are many literacy and language benefits, plus extensions for learning which include math, science, small muscle development, nutrition, and cooking:

### Activities:

- Read a book, talk about the illustrations (literacy).
- Talk about apples: where they grow, harvesting them, how to make applesauce (science).
- Teach children other fun rhymes to say or make up your own language (literacy).
- Use an apple peeler; let older children help peel apples for the sauce (muscle dev.).
- Teach children songs or finger plays about apples/applesauce (music/language).

- Make up other silly sayings, to mimic those in the book. Create activities to go along with the sayings the children make up (literacy / creativity).
- Cut an apple in half and find the “star” inside (science).
- Have a summer “reading program” at your home/facility – children would enjoy a literacy camp! (literacy).
- Use the apples you buy to paint with or make apple prints on paper (art).
- Talk about types of apples, variety of colors, weigh them, taste different ones (science and language).

#### **Songs/Rhymes:**

- It’s Raining, its Pouring.
- Itsy Bitsy Spider.
- Rain, Rain, go Away.

#### **Finger play:**

- Way up high in the apple tree (extend arms out like a tree).
- Two little apples, smiled at me (palms up and smile).
- I shook that tree as hard as I could (move hands back/forth in shaking motion).
- And down.....fell the apples and “yum” were they good. (rub tummy).

#### **Books with related themes:**

- How do Apples Grow? by Betsy Maestro.
- Applesauce by Shirley Kurtz.
- Ten Red Apples by Pat Hutchins.
- Roscoe Riley Rules#4: Never Swim in Applesauce by Katherine Applegate (suitable for older children).

#### **Cooking/Snack Extensions:**

- Make applesauce waffles from The Book Lover’s Cookbook, by Shaundra Kennedy Wenger and Janet Jensen (Cookbook Heaven at [RecipeLink.com](http://RecipeLink.com)).
- Make apple snack – lady bugs from [www.Flip-FlopsandApplesauce](http://www.Flip-FlopsandApplesauce.com) (Ideas for family togetherness).
- Peel or core apples and serve with peanut butter for a snack.
- Make apple butter and serve on toast.
- Make and bake an apple pie.

#### **Community Extensions:**

- Go to a local market or orchard to buy apples.
- See how many different colors of apples you can find.
- Visit an apple orchard to watch cider being made.

You will find numerous books for children that offer cooking opportunities, related activities, and extensions that you can use rather than turning on the TV. Tap into your own imagination and the power of play with children, “cook” up a story, an experiment, and use resources you already have in your home or center. Just remember that media cannot provide key experiences that children need in order to grow, to develop, and to become successful adults. One of the Web sites reviewed for this article summed it up best in their introduction: “Congratulations, you just received an extra 4 hours per day that you can use to strengthen your family, improve your health, and follow your dreams.....” (by turning off the TV!) ❖

## **MORE BOOKS!!!**

- \* *Mudlicious: Stories and Art Featuring Food for Preschool Children*, by Jan Irving.
- \* *Second Helpings: Books and Activities about Food*, by Jan Irving.
- \* *Themeasaurus*, by Jean Warren (various topics).
- \* *Mudpies to Magnets: Preschool Science Curriculum*, by Robert Williams.
- \* *Linking Language*, by Robert Rockwell, Debra Hoge, Bill Searcy.
- \* *Piggy Back Songs*, by Jean Warren or Totline (various themes).
- \* *Totline 101: Rhymes & Finger plays*.
- \* *Little Hands: Finger plays & Action Songs* by Emily Stetson (2-6 yrs).
- \* *From the Garden: A Counting Book about Growing Food* by Michael Dahl.

## WHAT DOES A RATING REALLY MEAN?

Catherine Edgar, Licensing Consultant  
Genesee County

Movies, television programs, and video/computer games are required to have a rating to enable parents and child care providers to make informed decisions regarding what children should or should not be watching. These rating systems differ greatly and can cause some confusion. The following briefly defines each of the different media ratings and their meanings.

Information on movie ratings can be found at [www.mpa.org](http://www.mpa.org). Movies, whether they are in theaters or on video/dvd, are given the following ratings:

- **G (General Audience)** - Contains no nudity, sex scenes or drug use. Violence is minimal; appropriate for younger children to view.
- **PG (Parental Guidance Suggested)** - Contains more mature themes and may have some profanity, violence, or brief nudity but no drug use. Should be investigated before allowing younger children to view.
- **PG-13 (Parents Strongly Cautioned)** - May not be appropriate for children under age 13 because it may contain nudity, violence, and harsh language. Any drug use depicted in a movie requires a PG-13 rating.
- **R (Restricted)** - Contains adult material. Children under age must be accompanied by a parent or adult.
- **NC-17 (No one under 17 admitted)** - Content is appropriate only for an adult audience and persons under age 17 are prohibited.

Television and movie ratings differ greatly from one another. Television ratings list the specific content of the program that then determines the rating. Letters may be assigned to each rating, which explain the content of the program. The meaning of the letters differs depending on the program rating. The ratings, along with the content labels, appear in the corner of the TV screen during the first 15 seconds of each program and also in TV listings.

The following are a list of the different ratings for television programs:

- **Y** – Specifically designed for young children.
- **G** – Designed for general audiences; content generally suitable for all ages.
- **Y7** – Directed towards children age 7 and above. An “FV” underneath this rating means that the program also contains fantasy violence.
- **PG** – Parental guidance is suggested due to material that may be unsuitable for younger children. Below the PG rating, there may also be an additional rating such as “D” for suggestive dialogue; “L” for infrequent coarse language; “S” for some sexual situations; or “V” for moderate violence.
- **14** – Contains material that may be unsuitable for children under age 14. Like the PG rating, there may also be an additional content rating such as “D” for intensely suggestive dialogue; “L” for strong, coarse language; “S” for intense sexual situations; or “V” for intense violence.
- **MA** – Designed for mature audiences only and may be unsuitable for anyone under age 17. There may also be an additional content rating of “L” for crude, indecent language; “S” for explicit sexual activity; or “V” for graphic violence.

The V-Chip, which was installed in most televisions made after the year 2000, enables parents and providers to block programming that they do not want children to view. More information on television ratings is available at [www.tvguidelines.org](http://www.tvguidelines.org) and further information on the V-Chip can be found at [www.thetvboss.org](http://www.thetvboss.org).

Video and computer games are rated by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). Like television, ESRB ratings have two parts: A rating

## FOR MORE INFO ON RATINGS, GO TO:

[www.tvguidelines.org](http://www.tvguidelines.org)

and

[www.fcc.gov/parents/tvratings.html](http://www.fcc.gov/parents/tvratings.html)

symbol that suggests age appropriateness, and content descriptors that indicate elements of a game that may be of concern. The rating symbol is located on the front of the game box, while the content descriptor is located on the back of the box. The ESRB rating symbols are:

- **EC (Early Childhood)** – Ages 3 and older.
- **E (Everyone)** – Ages 6 and older.
- **E+10 (Everyone 10+)** – Ages 10 and older.
- **T (Teen)** – Ages 13 and older.
- **M (Mature)** – Ages 17 and older.
- **AO (Adults Only)** – 18 years of age or older.
- **RP (Rating Pending)** – This game is awaiting final rating. This symbol only appears in advertising, prior to a game's release.

There are a total of 31 ESRB content descriptors that accompany a game rating. For a complete list of the content descriptors as well as more information on computer and video game ratings, please go to [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

It is up to the parents and child care providers to assure suitable programming for all forms of media. Utilizing these rating systems and referring to the identified web sites will assist in this endeavor. ❖

## MORE GREAT WEB SITES...

[www.bookcast.com](http://www.bookcast.com)  
[www.preschoolexpress.com](http://www.preschoolexpress.com)  
[www.education.com](http://www.education.com)  
[www.totline.com](http://www.totline.com)  
[www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com) (offers books, activities, etc).  
[www.jacketflap.com](http://www.jacketflap.com)  
[www.flipflopapplesauce.com](http://www.flipflopapplesauce.com) (simple ideas for family get togethers)  
[www.barnesandnobles.com](http://www.barnesandnobles.com)  
[www.crisscrossapplesauce.typepad.com](http://www.crisscrossapplesauce.typepad.com)  
[www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com) (over 4,000 pgs. of activities to go with her books)  
[www.recipelink.com](http://www.recipelink.com) (find recipes)  
[www.theeducationcenter.com](http://www.theeducationcenter.com)

### SCHOOL READINESS

*Cont. from page 5*

13. Resist buying products related to TV programming. Instead, buy toys and other products that allow for more creativity in play.

We all have a responsibility to foster children's development in a positive way. We were once young and the adults in our lives looked out for us. Now it is up to us to lessen the impact of media in our children's lives. ❖

## UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS, CLASSES AND OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Michigan Collaborative Early Childhood Conference  
January 28-30, 2009  
Dearborn, MI  
517-336-9700  
<http://www.miaeyc.org>  
[mcecc@miaeya.org](mailto:mcecc@miaeya.org)

MiAEYC Administrator Institute  
March 3, 2009  
Macomb ISD, Clinton Twp, MI  
(888) 666-2392  
(517) 336-9700  
<http://www.miaeyc.org>  
[conference@miaeyc.org](mailto:conference@miaeyc.org)

2009 Annual Early Childhood Training Conference  
Michigan Head Start Association  
March 12-13, 2009  
Kalamazoo, MI  
(517) 374-6472  
<http://www.mhsa.org>

MiAEYC Early Childhood Conference  
March 26-28, 2009  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(888) 666-2392  
517-336-9700  
<http://www.miaeyc.org>  
[conference@miaeyc.org](mailto:conference@miaeyc.org)

Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health Conference  
April 26-28, 2009  
Ann Arbor, MI  
734-785-7700 ext. 7210  
<http://www.mi-aimh.org>

Michigan After School Collaborative Summer Summit  
May 29, 2009  
Lansing, MI  
(517) 241-4290  
<http://www.miafterschool.com>  
[stoela@michigan.gov](mailto:stoela@michigan.gov)

# IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER!!!

## ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLASSES

(Call organization for classes, dates, and times.)

### Michigan 4C Association

[www.mi4c.org](http://www.mi4c.org)  
(517) 351-4171  
(800) 950-4171

### Michigan State University Extension

<http://bkc.fcs.msue.msu.edu/>  
(517) 432-7654

### Child Care Expulsion Prevention (CCEP)

Social and Emotional Training Series  
(248) 739-1414  
[mackrain@aol.com](mailto:mackrain@aol.com)

### T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps)

[www.mi4c.org/teach](http://www.mi4c.org/teach)  
(866) MITEACH, (866) 648-3224

### HighScope Training Opportunities

[www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org)  
(734) 485-2000 ext. 234

**RESOURCES: Media in Child Care**

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## **SIGN UP NOW!!!**

Get child care updates and news sent directly to you via email when you sign up to be part of a child care LISTSERV at:

**<http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare>**

Click on “Electronic Notification” under “Contact Us”

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 BUREAU OF CHILDREN AND ADULT LICENSING  
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### CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION INFANT/CHILD PRODUCT RECALLS (not including toys)

These recalls have been added since September 2008:

- Drop Side Cribs By Delta Enterprise recalled to repair spring peg failure; can cause entrapment and suffocation hazards.
- Recall of Convertible Cribs by Playkids USA; crib poses entrapment and suffocation hazards.
- My Way Corp. recalls Baby Walkers due to stairway fall hazard.
- Outdoor Playset Gliders recalled by Backyard Play Systems due to fall hazard.
- Four-wheeled Ride-On Vehicles recalled by Razor USA due to throttle controller defect.
- Harry Potter bookends recalled By Giftco due to violation of lead paint standard.
- Simplicity brand Drop Side Cribs recalled by various retailers.
- Some recalled Simplicity Bassinets include Graco and "Winnie the Pooh" brand.
- Optave Inc. recalls Action Baby Carriers due to fall hazard.
- Baby hammocks recalled by FlagHouse Inc. due to fall and strangulation hazards.
- Regal Lager recalls to repair Phil & Teds Strollers due to laceration hazard.
- Stroller Activity Bars recalled by International Playthings due to choking hazard.
- Baby Appleseed recalls cribs due to fall hazard.
- Mother Hubbard's Cupboards recalls cribs due to fall hazard.
- Stanley Furniture recalls cribs due to entrapment hazard.
- Jardine Cribs sold by Babies"R"Us recalled due to entrapment and strangulation hazard.

Details on these product recalls may be obtained on the Consumer Product Safety Commission's web site: <http://www.cpsc.gov>

Copies Printed: 16,300  
 Cost: \$4,867.72 (.29 ea.)  
 Authority: DHS Director



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