

Counselor's Corner

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Children and Media/Screen Time

Now that we are well into the school year, if you haven't already done so it's time to make smart media rules and put your child on the path to school success. Sometimes, we don't give media impact much thought. TV, the Internet, videogames, smart phones, music... all play significant roles in how we spend our time. To set kids up for school success, make sure their media time is well spent. Create smart media rules for your kids, so they can use digital tools for creativity, connecting with friends and family, to learn about their world, and yes, to have fun and relax. Smart media rules keep your child in control and keep media use in balance. As school ramps up, our busy lives just get busier. When making your smart media rules, please consider the following:

- 1. Ability to Focus Attention** - Children need to be able to focus attention so they can learn what is being taught. Many TV shows, video games and Internet sites require a very limited amount of attention from the viewer. Make sure you provide activities for your children that require them to pay attention. Reading, art, science and building projects, as well as outings, are all activities that reward your child for paying attention.
- 2. Ability to Maintain Attention** - Too much fast-paced media trains children to always expect constant sensory stimulation. Their attention wanders when they don't have it. Avoid a steady diet of extremely fast-paced programs, movies and games, especially when children are very young.
- 3. Persistence** - Sometimes it takes real persistence to complete a school assignment. TV, video games, and other media provide instant gratification. Too much media affects a child's ability to stick with an activity when things get frustrating.