

PROVISION OF CARE – MEDIA USE IN FAMILY DAY CARE

POLICY

The use of television, video, DVD and computer games is part of everyday life for Australian children. Family Day Care recognises that there are many high quality programs and games available for young children, and believes that these can be sensibly integrated into a child's care experience.

However, it is important that the Educator exercise control over the choice of program and amount of time spent on these activities, bearing in mind the following findings on the effects of media on the children:

- **Physical:** our children are becoming significantly heavier, and early problems with excess weight has been linked to diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure and obesity in adulthood. Lack of exercise due to spending too long in front of the television or computer, accompanied by consumption of snack food, has been identified as a significant contributory factor.
- **Intellectual:** Children's curiosity and interest can be encouraged by the careful choice of program, and active viewing with an involved adult. However, passive solitary viewing may dull a child's interest and reduce their interaction with the real world around them.
- **Emotional:** Children may identify with characters they see on television or in movies, and if violence is presented as acceptable, the child may imitate this behaviour. A child may also become numbed to the emotional impact of violence, or else may become anxious if exposed to adult programming, including news items, that involve harm or violence

PROCEDURE

1. Educators should exercise care and discretion over the amount of viewing and the subject matter that children in care are exposed to while in care.
2. Preschoolers should only view programs, videos or games with a G rating. Educators should supervise viewing and encourage interaction and discussion of ideas and issues where possible.
3. School age children may watch some PG rated material, but Educators should ensure that the content is appropriate for the children and that they have got the parent's approval.
4. Viewing should be limited to specific, limited periods and the television or computer should be turned off at other times.
5. Educators should use the media as a component of a planned program, not as a reward or last resort to deal with behaviour issues.
6. Children should not be exposed to adult daytime programming, including news, even if they are apparently engaged in other activities.
7. Older children and teenagers in the household may have to modify their viewing, or watch TV and play on the computer in areas of the home inaccessible to the Family Day Care children.
8. Ratings and reviews of current movies can be obtained on www.youngmedia.org.au.

Source: National Law, Regulations and Standards (ACECQA 2011)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Reviewed September 2005, November 2008, July 2009, July 2012