



The Licensing Link

Dakota County Social Services

From Your Licensing Worker

TV or Not TV, That is the Question

By: Becky Elrasheedy

Shakespeare did not have to ponder this question while writing his “Hamlet,” but it is a question that all caregivers should ponder. Television viewing has been on the rise for the last 20 years. It is used for a variety of reasons such as keeping children busy while meals are prepared, used for educational and children’s shows, viewing daily news, for noise, and general entertainment. Let’s look at what has been happening in our homes during these past two decades regarding our use of television and how it may be affecting children.

According to Media Wise information, 99% of the homes in the United States have TV sets with an average of 2.6 sets per home. The average child watches 24 hours of TV per week versus an average of 2.5 hours alone with mom and dad, 2 hours alone reading, and 8 hours alone playing video games per week. Young children have televisions and computers in their bedrooms where there is no monitoring of any kind. This has dramatically changed the way children learn.

We see TV ads promoting programs and videos that are geared for children. There are even videos that are named after a genius, made especially for babies. They give the impression that these programs which are shown on children’s networks will help children increase their IQ and skills and that it is a good way to help children while keeping them busy.... but is it?

Let’s look at how children learn language. Babies learn language through interaction. We know that they watch our face from 7-8 inches away and that they see our facial movements and they demonstrate that they can also make these movements. They recognize our expressions as acknowledgement of their vocalizations. We usually raise our voices an octave when talking to babies and this helps babies zone in on our voices and sounds. Learning to speak and understand language is an interactive process. If a baby is sitting in front of a TV, they do not have these expressions and tones to help them learn. They are not able to see how faces change and form letters and they do not get the feedback from their own vocalizations that they need. A recent study out of the University of Washington showed that children between 8 and 16 months who watched one hour a day of the baby videos such as, the “Baby Einstein Videos” had a 17 point decrease in language assessment than other children who don’t watch TV or videos. To learn language, babies need to be spoken to and read to frequently.



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From Your Licensing Worker...Continued

The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that children under two should not watch TV. They have also recommended that children over the age of 2 should not watch TV or play video games for more than two hours per day. Studies have shown that children who watch a lot of TV or play video and computer games more than 2 hours per day have less language ability when they start school than do children who are limited to less TV time. Language skills are one indicator of whether children will do well in school, gain problem solving skills, have complex thought, and good social skills. The more time in front of TV programs, the less likely these skills will develop.

It is important for caregivers and parents to understand that the goal of TV is not to educate, but to sell products (advertisement). The people responsible for programming understand that excitement, or what is known as “jolts,” such as violence, special effects, sex, and swearing, gain people’s attention. They put these “jolts” into programs and advertisements to keep a person from switching the channel and creating more revenue for the station. If violence, swearing, aggressive behavior, drugs, and sex is seen often, it desensitizes a person and creates a new norm. Young children do not view television as just fantasy, to them it is part of their real world. Studies show that there are an average of 3 acts of violence in children’s shows per program. Viewing a lot of TV has brought violence as a norm to children. Studies show that just one showing of violence such as seen on “Power Rangers” is enough to make very young children hit and imitate this behavior. What is important for us to remember is that having acts of violence or sex as part of the norm has created a society of children who are no longer empathetic to the plights of those less fortunate than themselves or in a predicament that could be harmful to them. We are seeing an increase of bullying behavior, incidents of road rage, muggings, etc. We need to be sure that our children do not become desensitized to hurtful acts.

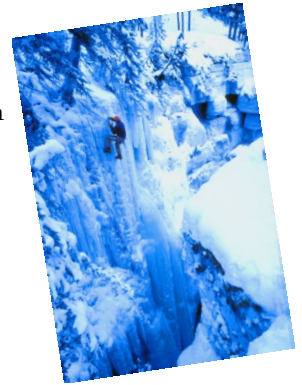
I have heard a lot of providers and parents say that they use the TV just for background noise or that children are not really watching what the adult is watching. “How can this affect children?” As I am one of those people who does not like a quiet home, I am aware that people often have a TV running for the noise. I have seen children play and stop what they are doing because they hear a commercial for their favorite toy or program. This indicates that they are listening, at least passively, and absorbing what they hear. (Commercials are often in a louder tone than normal programs and have music or action to grab a person’s attention.) This causes children to run in to see the TV or to stop their play and search out the TV if in the same room. This behavior has been linked to a shortened attention span in children. Even if children are viewing a child’s show on TV, the action is quickly paced, causing children to expect immediate results which can also have the affect of a shortened attention span. Schools are not set up to teach in this very fast pace and children are having a harder time paying attention in regular classrooms. Children are therefore having a harder time waiting for results which may cause problems in dealing with real life as they get older.

I have also seen a number of children being put down for naps in a room where the provider may be watching their news or favorite soap. It seems that this should not hurt anyone as children are still supervised while they sleep. These shows have a lot of the violence and other “jolts” mentioned earlier. Children do see and hear what is going on during the many times they open their eyes during the napping routine. They hear the swear words that might pop out and they may see the news which is filled with violent and scary subjects. Children view these experiences as part of daily life and their behavior mimics what they see and hear. There is a reason that there is a saying that has been around for years, “Little pitchers have big ears”. This means that adults must be careful about what is said within the hearing of children. (The saying referred to the large handles (ears) sometimes attached to small vessels.)





OK, does this mean that children should never watch television? What about those nasty Minnesota days when the wind chill is well below zero and the children are needing a change from the inside routine, but cannot get outside. There are some excellent shows that have the children marching and dancing around. There are also some shows that are geared for actually stimulating a child's thoughts such as "Dora the Explorer" or "Arnold". There are also some shows that are geared towards children, such as the Disney Movies, that tell a story (that I have loved since I was a young child even though they touch on tough subjects and they have violence in them). What about these? "Can't I just have children watch these shows?"



Children can benefit from these types of media, but it is important they be viewed with an adult who can talk about different incidents that come up, so children do not see some of the violence as "ok" and part of a norm. For children to learn, they need to interact with all of their senses and this means having feedback and being asked questions, not just passively sitting and watching (vegetating) in front of a movie.

I have used the movie "Beauty and The Beast" in many of my trainings regarding the affects of television on children. In this movie, (it is one of my favorite movies), there is a scene where everyone is drinking to Gaston and bragging about how big he is and how strong he is and that he wins every fight. LeFou, Gaston's friend and companion wants to be like him even while Gaston is punching him. This scene is filled with great music and the characters seem to be having a great time with a lot of fun and excitement. This scene is not something that children should be viewing by themselves as many young children would want to be like this great strong character, Gaston, when he is actually a bully. They don't see that he is not a very good friend to LeFou and that people actually get hurt by him.

Children need to have an adult present to point out that this behavior is not the norm and that they would certainly not care for a friend who acts like Gaston. They need someone to talk about what it really means to be a friend and to care for someone. Caring for someone is a quality that is represented well in the movie when the Beast finally tells Belle to go home to her father who is in trouble, but often this value would be missed because of all of the excitement in the fighting scenes. It is imperative for adults to be viewing what programs children are watching, even those supposedly created for children, to help them understand the morals behind these stories and not just the action packed funny and violent scenes.

National studies have also shown that viewing TV, playing electronic games, and computer usage on the part of young children has increased to such a level that children are not being as physically active as in the past and thus there is an increase in childhood obesity. It is important to recognize that what happens in a young child's life sets a routine for them. Children are still making connections in their brain for their motor activity and they need continuous stimulation in order to develop physically.

So TV or not TV, that is the question. TV can help present values, morals, education, and physical activity when done in a correct manner with involvement from the caregiver. There needs to be interaction with this activity just as you do with other planned activities. TV should not be used as a babysitter or as a little break from a caregiver's routine. It should be seen as part of the plan and learning activity for children in care. The recommended amount of TV, video, and computer for a child is no more than two hours per day. It is important to remember that the child's day does not start and end in childcare. There is going to be TV watching at home as well, therefore you should limit the media maximum to half of a child's recommended media allowance and inform parents of the amount and type of TV that you are using in your childcare. Make TV viewing a question that you really ponder, so that you are creating an atmosphere of value in a child's life.

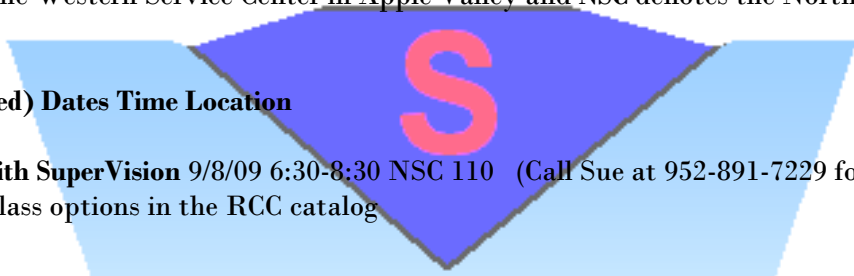




SUPERVISION U

Upcoming Training

NOTE: WSC denotes the Western Service Center in Apple Valley and NSC denotes the Northern Service Center in West St. Paul.



CORE courses (required) Dates Time Location

1. Super Care Starts with SuperVision 9/8/09 6:30-8:30 NSC 110 (Call Sue at 952-891-7229 for registration. Also look for Supervision class options in the RCC catalog)

2. Supervision Through the Stages is a two part class. You must attend both sessions.

- **Supervision Thru the Infant/Toddler Stages 10/8/09** 6:30-8:30 WSC L139 (These classes meet the child development training requirement)
- **Supervision Thru the Preschool Stages 10/29/09** 6:30-8:30 WSC L139 Both preschool and toddler courses need to be completed for Supervision U

Managing The Child Care Environment — Presenter Cory Woosley - This class is being offered by the Dakota County Family Child Care Association. Please see their web site for the actual location it will be held. The date is 9/10/09 and it will be held in Eagan. They will also have information on their voice mail once a location has been confirmed. Registration is through the Child Care Association. The web site is <http://www.dcfcca.org> and the phone number is 952-985-3495. You must register for this class and there is a charge if you are not a member of the association.

ELECTIVES (choose three)

- 1. Rule Review/Handbook** Pick up a handbook from your licensor and take the post test for 2 hours of training credit
- 2. Group Dynamics** 10/1/09 6:30-8:30 WSC L139 (Call Sue at 952-891-7229 for registration)
- 3. Temperament** (Check out RCC for classes on this subject)
- 4. Stress & Burnout** (Check out RCC for classes on this subject)
- 5. Behavior Guidance** (Check out RCC for classes on this subject)

To register for the FREE Dakota County licensing sponsored classes, contact Sue Jahnke @ susan.jahnke@co.dakota.mn.us or 952-891-7229

To register for classes offered through RCC, call 651-641-3549 or register on-line at www.mnstreams.org or mail in the class registration form from the RCC catalog. There is a class fee for RCC training.



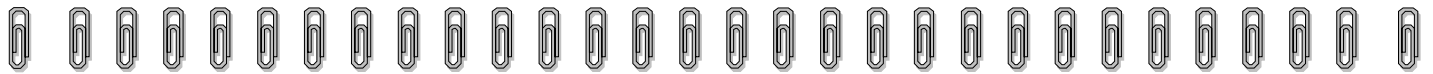


Child Restraint System Training

It is almost time to renew your Child Restraint System training if you took the training when it first became law in 2005. This training must be renewed every 5 years. The Dakota County Family Child Care Association is sponsoring the following child restraint system training provided by an approved trainer. The classes will be free of charge. The dates, time, and city are determined; however, actual location will not be decided until later in August. Please see their web site for the site of the classes. The Association will also have information on their voice mail once a place has been confirmed. Registration is through the Child Care Association. The web site is <http://www.dcfcca.org> and the phone number is 952-985-3495. You must register for these classes.

Classes will be:

- September 21, 2009 (6pm-9pm) Inver Grove Heights
- October 8, 2009 (6pm-9pm) Eagan
- December 7, 2009 (6pm-9pm) Apple Valley



SIDS/Shaken Baby Syndrome Training

Wednesday, October 21, 2009
 Dakota County Technical College
 1300 145th Street East (County Road 42)
 Rosemount, MN 55068
 Dakota Room
 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

To register: Please call Sue Jahnke at (952) 891-7229
 Registration deadline is October 15th

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES FOR 2009

Effective 8/1/09 A change to the Human Services Licensing Act, 245.50, subd. 5 [Sudden infant death syndrome and shaken baby syndrome training,] expands the training requirement related to shaken baby syndrome for family child care license holders, caregivers, staff and helpers, who assist in the care of infants or children under school age.

License holders must document that before staff persons, caregivers, and helpers assist in the care of infants, **and children under school age**, they receive training on reducing the risk of shaken baby syndrome. The combined training must be a minimum of one hour.

Introducing — From Biting to Assertiveness — Behavior Guidance and Activity Kit



Dakota County has put together 7 kits that help providers work with reducing biting behaviors in children. The kits are created to be loaned to caregivers for one month. They contain information that will help you lead children to being assertive instead of aggressive. The kit includes a “Guiding Children from biting to Assertiveness booklet” (the provider may keep the booklet at the end of the 30 days if they wish) to work with guiding children. The kit includes 5 books for children which are: Teeth are not for Biting; Hands are not for Hitting; Words are not for Hurting; No Hitting; When You’re Mad and You Know It. There are also four posters which include rules that children need to learn in order to become assertive. These posters include words and pictures and should be posted on your wall where children can see them during the month. The rules are part of the monthly activity.

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A Look At Safety

Most Personal care products, cleaners, medicines, and alcohol are toxic to children and therefore need to be inaccessible to all children up to the age of 11. Dakota County has determined that we will accept items that are at least 5 feet high or in a locked cabinet as being inaccessible to children. In most upper kitchen cupboards the bottom shelves are lower than 5 feet and therefore the above items would have to be above this shelf. Check through your home and be sure that items that are not a minimum of 5 feet high are moved or locked in some manner. When looking in the bathroom, we would measure 5 feet from the toilet lid as this is a permanent structure and easy for children to climb up on where you will not see them. (If you have children that you know can open the child locks or reach above 5 feet, then you should move the items to an area higher than 5 feet or a locked cabinet with locks that are not easily opened.)



Rule Reminder



As hunting season approaches we thought it would be a good idea to take a look at what the MN Child Care Rule requires in relation to firearms and ammunition:

9502.0435 SANITATION AND HEALTH.

Subp. 5. FIREARMS. All firearms must be unloaded and inaccessible to children. Ammunition and firearms must be stored in separate locked areas.

Dakota County Child Care Licensing interprets this to mean that if you have any weapons or ammunition in your home, these items are locked and stored separately. Trigger locks on guns are *not secure enough* on their own – firearms need to be kept in a locked area (i.e. gun safe, closet, storage room) and this area must be locked with a keyed lock or a padlock. Kinder locks, hook & eye latches, slide locks, etcetera are *not secure enough* – the lock must require the use of a key and that key needs to be kept inaccessible to children as well. Ammunition must also be kept in a separate locked area such as a locked ammo box. Again, this must be locked with a key lock or a padlock. When your worker visits your home, s/he will ask to view where you store ammunition and firearms. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any one of us in the licensing office.





Did You Know?



Record keeping is a necessary “evil” among the many duties of a licensed child care provider. Licensors hear many times that all of the thing providers do, paperwork is something that providers like the least. It should be understood that many of the forms are created to make things **easier and more efficient** for providers. Here are some examples:

The admission forms quickly give providers the necessary contact information in the event of an emergency. A handful of providers have informed this worker of a useful hint regarding the admission form. The hint is to make an extra copy of the form in the event that 911 needs to be called. The provider can then just give that copy to the responding emergency worker, and not be concerned with losing the original.

The “permission to administer” form is a way for parents to communicate with the provider in the event that a child has an allergy or reaction to an over-the-counter product. As a provider, it is preferred to be told by a parent of a child’s reaction or allergy to a product, than to have the provider be the first to experience such a reaction.

One area of record keeping that is often overlooked is the requirement for providers to have written instructions from parents that apply to anything special or non-routine about a child in care. These instructions can be in the areas of toilet training, eating, sleeping or napping, allergies, and any health problems. Special instructions or plans are required, for example, if a child has severe allergies and an Epi pen is prescribed for a child. The parent should describe in the written plan what the child is allergic to; what an allergic reaction looks like; when the child has a reaction, in what order should the provider’s response be (call 911, administer the Epi pen medication, call parents). Another area of special written instructions could include a child in care who has diabetes. The parents needs to again list the educational and hands-on components of caring for a child with this disease, (what high and low glucose levels look like; how to test the blood glucose levels; what foods to avoid; administering insulin injections). These two examples given are complex situations, but a written plan can be as simple as the special brand of infant formula a parent wants for the feeding of an infant. Just remember if a child has any special needs, those needs must be addressed in a written plan or instructions by the parent for the child care provider.

From Biting to Assertiveness...Continued...

There are also 22 feelings photos with activity ideas to go along with them to help children recognize feelings. The activities will help you teach children how to express their own feelings. There is also a wall activity entitled “Teeth are For” which is an activity to help children recognize the positive aspect of their teeth and not remind them of the negative. The laminated stop sign is used in activities in the booklet and will help all the children learn what stop is in a fun, positive manner. It will also help children recognize that they can say “stop” to something that is hurtful.



This kit is designed to stay with the provider for one month while you incorporate a variety of the information and activities into your program. There is a waiting list and we will take your name and bring out the kit when it is available. To see if a kit is available or place your name on the waiting list, please contact your licensing worker.



Dakota County Child Care Licensing

14955 Galaxie Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Phone: (952) 891-7400
Fax: (952) 891-7473



We're on the Web!!!
www.co.dakota.mn.us

PASS IT ON...

Kay Lienke suggests adopting a park in the children's (or business) name, and dedicate the kids and their parents to keep it clean.

www.childcareland.com Beth Beltz has given us the name of this web site. There are free items on the site if you go to daily learning sheet, daily art projects, and free printables however there are some other great things that you can get if you purchase the CDs as well as some great ideas she presents on her videos. Check it out!

Thanks Beth

CHILD CARE SERVICES GRANT APPLICATIONS AND GUIDE WILL BE AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

Grant information will be available through two web sites effective 9/1/09 for this coming grant period. These are www.resourcesforchildcare.org or www.mnchildcare.org or you may call the grant line now to request an application be sent 9/1/09 at 651-287-6919. Check www.resourcesforchildcare.org (for childcare providers-grants) for workshops that they are offering on grant info. Deadline for grant submission is September 25, 2009.



Dakota County Child Care Licensor Directory

Hastings, Inver Grove Heights

Becky Elrasheedy 952-891-7361
Becky.Elrasheedy@co.dakota.mn.us

Apple Valley and Burnsville L-Z

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Website:

www.dakotacounty.us/HealthFamily/ChildCareProviders