Electronic Media Guidelines

Classroom Use

Electronic devices and interactive media are tools that can promote effective learning and development when they are used intentionally by early childhood educators, within the framework of developmentally appropriate practice. Appropriate use of electronic media depends on the age, developmental level, needs, interests, linguistic background, and abilities of each child. Developmentally appropriate practices must guide decisions about whether and when to integrate technology and interactive media into early childhood programs. Technology and media should be used to support learning, not an isolated activity, and to expand young children's access to new content (Guernsey 2010a, 2011b). (*NAEYC position statement January 2012: Technology and Interactive media as tools in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8.)*

If television or other electronic visual media is used, it must be part of a planned developmentally appropriate program with an educational, social, physical or other learning objective that includes identified goals and objectives. Television and other electronic visual media must not be used solely to occupy time. When using electronic visual media in the classroom to promote children's learning and development, goals and objectives for its use must be present on the classroom planning sheet.

Television and other electronic visual media must be turned off when not part of a planned developmentally appropriate program activity. Children must not watch television or other electronic visual media during meals. Television and other electronic visual media must be turned off while children are sleeping, and during established nap times. This is not to prohibit an individual from using electronic visual media for business purposes during sleep or nap time if all children are sleeping and its use does not interfere with the supervision of children. Infants must not be exposed to television and other forms pf electronic visual media. (Infants is defined as a child birth-18 months) (*OCFS regulations 418-1.7 (h) (1) (2) (3) & (z))*

Any electronic media platform that does not allow a staff member to control content and regulate children's exposure to inappropriate material is prohibited. (EX: radiobroadcasts, pod casts, Sirius XM, etc.) If streaming devices are used, parental controls need to be set and turned on. At all times, music selections must be developmentally appropriate.

Professional Use

Electronic media devices may be used in classrooms for professional purposes. Staff use of such devices shall not interfere with welcoming children and families, supervising children and assisting children and families to exit the program. OCFS regulations must be adhered to at all times.

Classroom staff use the Procare app to communicate with families and one another. Please check the Procare app at appropriate times throughout the day while making sure this communication does not interfere with supervision of children. Each classroom and staff member is assigned an IC3 email address. Classroom Teachers must check the classroom email once per day. All staff must check their personal IC3 email once per day.

Personal Use

The use of any type of personal electronic media device for social or entertainment purposes, including, but not limited to, listening to music on headphones, playing screen games, surfing the internet, sending e-mails and/or texts, or making personal calls while supervising children is prohibited.

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The use of personal mobile phones is permitted only when a class is off-site (such as during a field trip or walk) and solely for purposes related to children's safety and the orderly operation of the program (OCFS regulation 418-1.8(n)).

OCFS regulations require one staff member to have eyes on the children and supervise them at all times. When conducting business using a lap top or tablet, make sure one staff member is able to visibly supervise all of the children. It is a violation of the regulations for all staff to be using an electronic device at the same time.