FDLRS Record

Newsletter for the University of Florida FDLRS-MDC program in Jacksonville

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Screen Time Suggestions
by Chelsea Pierce, M. Ed.

In a society focused around digital media, how can we encourage our children to detach from their screens and interact with the environment around them? Social skills are built upon meaningful engagement with others and there are numerous opportunities for reciprocal social interaction throughout our daily lives.

Educational apps, games and shows are accessible to children on televisions, tablets and smartphones. There are apps for almost everything from potty training to learning a new language! Common topics in today's field of education include STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and Digital Citizenship (responsible use of technology). Learning opportunities facilitated by technology provide children with some of the prerequisite skills they need to be successful in an increasingly high-tech world. However, these apps are in no way a replacement for human social interaction.

Some studies have shown a negative correlation between brain development in young children and the amount of time spent in front of a screen, such as a tablet, TV or

OUR SERVICES
Who we Serve:
- Individuals between the ages of 3 & 22 who have not graduated high school.
- Who are struggling in school and have complicated medical, behavioral, developmental, &/or social histories
- And who reside in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, & St. Johns counties

Services for Families:
- Comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment, which may include psychoeducational, emotional-behavioral, &/or developmental pediatric evaluations
- Feedback sessions and a report detailing our findings
- Assistance in planning for your child's educational and psychological needs
- Trainings for parents covering a variety of topics

Services for the Community:
- Training/consultations for educators, students, & other professionals
- Educational consultation and support services: This can include collaboration with school personnel to facilitate school placement & provision of services

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smartphone. Dr. Aric Sigman stated, "Too much screen time too soon is the very thing impeding the development of the abilities that parents are so eager to foster through the tablets. The ability to focus, to concentrate, to lend attention, to sense other people's attitudes and communicate with them, to build a large vocabulary—all those abilities are harmed" (Sigman, 2014).

Others have recognized a relationship between frequent use of social media and depression/anxiety concerns (Vickroy, 2017). Frequent use of social media has been linked to teenagers engaging in sexting and becoming victims of cyberbullying and harassment (O'Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

To minimize risks of screen time use, the following suggestions have been developed:

1. Closely monitor your child's use of digital devices and social media.

2. Ensure that you have access to your child's social media accounts.

3. Build in opportunities for social interactions by encouraging participation in adult-monitored social activities such as sports, scouts and play dates.

4. Encourage open communication between you and your children.

5. Set limits for screen time. If you are unsure about how to structure your family's media usage, the following site may be a helpful starting point:

https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx

Using these guidelines, you can modify your family's screen time and structure social interactions so your time together is enjoyable and beneficial for everyone!

References:

O'Keeffe, G. S. & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families. *Pediatrics, 124* (4), 800-804. http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/800

Sigman, A. (2014). Virtually addicted: Why general practice must now confront screen dependency. *British Journal of General Practice, 64* (629), 610-611. http://bjgp.org/content/64/629/610

Vickroy, D. (2017). Helping teens turn off in a world that's 'always on': The links between technology and depression. *Daily Southtown*, http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-teens-depression-technology-st-1220-20171221-story.html

Transitioning from High School to College

by Lisa D. Bailey, Ph.D.

For many students with learning disabilities, making the transition from high school to college can seem like a challenging process. They must move from the high school setting where supports were provided through an IEP or 504 Plan to an academic setting where those same accommodations are not guaranteed. Students in grades K-12 are covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students are often surprised to discover that the IDEA does not apply to them after they graduate from high school and that colleges do not offer IEPs. However, college students *are* covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, both of which require colleges to provide accommodations for covered individuals with disabilities *if* they disclose their disability to the college. It is important for students to recognize that documentation of their learning disabilities will not be automatically sent to their selected college. *The student must disclose his or her own information and request accommodations from the college*. Some students choose to disclose and request accommodations, while others do not.

If students decide to disclose their learning disability and request accommodations, they will need to do this with the appropriate office/department at their college. Usually, an office of disability services manages student accommodation requests. This office will request appropriate documentation of the disability and work with the student to determine what supports or accommodations are needed and available at the college. It will be up to the student to decide whether and how they will disclose their learning disability to anyone else.

Whether or not a student chooses to seek accommodations for their learning challenges, he or she will need many skills to make a smooth transition from high school to college.

1. Students must recognize that although college is a very different environment from high school, there are materials available to help them navigate this new setting.

2. Students should take advantage of informational materials, such as the course catalog and/or student handbook. These documents provide much needed information about rules, policies and procedures that students entering the college are expected to follow. They also provide information about class schedules and the academic calendar. Finally, these

FDLRS Staff

David O. Childers Jr., M.D.
Chief of Developmental Pediatrics & Executive Director of FDLRS-MDC, Developmental Pediatrician

Jeannie M. Bowles, M.B.A.
Assistant Director - FDLRS-MDC

Stephanie Kinnare, Ph.D.
Clinical Director of FDLRS-MDC Licensed Psychologist

Lisa D. Bailey, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist

Candice Rosenberg, M.Ed
Educational Coordinator

Audrey Bringman, B.S.
Clinician

Chelsea Pierce, M. Ed.
Clinician

Ashley Parker, MS CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist

Autumn Mauch
Executive Assistant

Karen Auger
Office Manager

Tyler Rounds, B.S.
Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Flagge, B.S.
Event Coordinator

Anthony R. Rhodes, M.S.
IT Expert

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documents contain information about graduation requirements and courses needed to complete each degree. Students should review these documents carefully and use them to help decide on a major or course of study.

3. Students should also take advantage of the knowledge of their advisors or peer mentors. These individuals have a great deal of knowledge about the inner workings of the college and the expectations students must meet.

4. Students will receive a syllabus for each of their classes. This document contains all of the information about assignments and their professors' expectations of their students. Students should use this document to plan their assignments and study schedule.

5. If not already familiar with the use of a planner, either electronic or paper and pencil, students will need to develop a method of tracking and planning how they will complete assignments. This will increase organization and decrease the likelihood of "forgotten" assignments.

6. Students will have to develop strong time management skills, which include becoming more efficient with their time, using time wisely, avoiding procrastination, and planning completion of tasks and assignments.

7. Students will need to develop strong problem-solving and decision-making skills. College students have more freedom and less structure than they did in high school. Many students struggle with making choices that support their

success. Practicing these skills *before* college is important.

8. Students must learn to set and work toward goals. Students with IEPs should be familiar with the goal-setting process. Students who are able to translate this skill to the college setting will be able to make practical and attainable goals about their education.

9. Students will also need to determine their best learning strategies. This is important because students are expected to structure much of their own learning. Those who have a better understanding of how they learn, study, and take tests are generally more effective learners and have a greater chance of academic success.

10. Students will also have to learn to navigate the social environment of college. In most cases, they will be exposed to a wider variety of peers. Working on age-appropriate social skills and social decision-making will be beneficial in helping them navigate this new social setting.

References and Recommended Readings:

Hopper, C. H. (2016). Practicing college learning strategies, 7th Edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Office of Disability Employment Policy, Department of Labor (2007). The why, when, what, and how of disclosure in a postsecondary academic setting. Retrieved from: http://www.ldonline.org/article/ The_Why%2C_When%2C_What% 2C_and_How_of_Disclosure_in_a_Postsecondary_A cademic_Setting

Modifications vs. Accommodations

by Audrey Bringman, M.Ed.

When you attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings or review completed IEPs or 504 plans, you may hear or see the words **accommodations** and **modifications**. They are very different and very important components of an IEP and a student's educational track.

Accommodations allow for changes in the way the material is presented or how students learn new material, but educational goals remain the same.

Modifications do alter the educational goals, change what type of material is being presented and what students are expected to learn.

There are many different types of accommodations and modifications that can be utilized to help students succeed academically. Educators may have to try various accommodations and modifications before finding the optimal supportive educational setting. Additionally, accommodations and modifications may change as students advance through middle and high school.

Parents, caregivers and educators should empower students to take an active role in their education and learn which accommodations or modifications work best for them. Students should be expected to practice self-advocacy and self-determination skills to request specific accommodations or modifications to help them throughout their educational career. When these skills are learned and practiced, students become more confident when advocating for accommodations and modifications in the college and career setting. See the table below for a list of possible accommodations and modifications (note: this is not a comprehensive list).

Resources:

Morin, A. (n.d.). Common Modifications and Accommodations. Retrieved from https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/common-classroom-accommodations-and-modifications

Strom, E. (n.d.). The difference between accommodations and modifications. Retrieved from https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/the-difference-between-accommodations-and-modifications

Examples of Accommodations	Examples of Modifications
Preferred Seating	Shorter reading assignment
Oral Instructions	Grade based on different scale/standard
Typed Notes	Different timed demands
Sensory or Fidget Item	Excusal from assignment or project
Audiobooks	Alternate homework assignment
Extended Time	Fewer quiz or test questions
Color-coded materials	Alternate assessments

Foster Vocabulary and Language Development by Reading to Your Child

By Ashley Parker, MS CCC-SLP

When children are very young, it is common for child development experts, teachers, and pediatricians to recommend that their parents read to them on a daily basis in order to foster speech and language development, regardless of their stage or typicality of development. Preschool children as a whole learn the majority of their preliteracy skills during adult interaction through shared reading opportunities (Westerveld & van Bysterveldt, 2017). From shared reading opportunities, children also gain perspective, knowledge of social skill situations, and vocabulary that can then be translated into expressive and receptive language abilities (Sigal, 2011).

As children grow and begin to be able to read for themselves, the benefits of a caregiver or parent reading to them continues to provide assistance in areas of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and the ability to sequence information, particularly in children with Autism and related social learning difficulties (Lonigan, et al., 2013). Listening to stories read aloud can allow children even into their early teen years to understand emotion, cultural differences, historical events, and social interactions (Pudewa, 2008). Research also supports that children who have heard repeated correct, sophisticated, and understandable language through reading are also more likely to become competent writers. Competence in writing involves having some baseline skills necessary to express thoughts and ideas in a variety of settings (Pudewa, 2008). These skills are necessary in the classroom and beyond as children and families look toward transition.

The type of book or literature that you read may matter to older children, but for very young children or babies, it doesn't matter *what* you read, but *how* you read it! Read with facial expression, good voice intonation, and show emotion. Below are some tips to use while reading with your child:

1. Read while facing your child, with the book close to your face so that they can see facial expressions and engage in eye contact.

2. Choose books with an engaging story and meaning to foster social skills and to discuss feelings and emotions.

3. Progressively lengthen the books that you choose in order to help your child attend to a task for longer periods of time.

4. Using books with predictive rhyme can assist in the development of rhyming skills and vocabulary development.

   List adapted from Sigal (2011).

References:

Lonigan, C.J., Purpura, D.J., Wilson, S.B., Walker, P.M., Clancy-Menchetti, J. (2013). Evaluating the Components of an Emergent Literacy Intervention for Preschool Children at Risk for Reading Difficulties. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 114*(1), 111–130.

Pudewa, A. (2008). *One Myth and Two Truths.* Retrieved from http://iew.com/help-support/resources/articles/one-myth-and-two-truths.

Sigal, S. (2011, June 14). How to Read Books with Children with Language Delay. [Blog Post]. Retrieved from https://blog.asha.org/2011/06/14/how-to-read-books-with-children-with-language-delay/.

Westerveld, M., & van Bysterveldt, A.K. (2017). The Home Literacy Environment of Preschool-Age Children with Autism or Down Syndrome. *Folia Phoniatrica et Logopaedica, 69*(1-2), 43-53. doi:10.1159/000475840

Take Time to Play this Holiday Season

By Stephanie Kinnare, Ph.D.

As we enter the busy holiday season, each member of the household faces his or her own somewhat daunting tasks. Many students face midterms, school project deadlines, and changes in routine to their normal class schedule. Many parents strive to donate a special something to their students' classroom holiday parties, and engage in endless holiday shopping and wrapping. On top of the unique holiday tasks, students (with help from parents) are still to keep up with their homework, read every day, practice those math facts, and…and…and….

Yet, I encourage you to attempt the art of integrating into the hustle and bustle some family leisure time, even if (ironically enough) such leisure time has to be scheduled in! While keeping up with academics is important, research has shown that family leisure time has great psychological benefits for mom, dad, and child (Coyl-Shepherd & Hanlon, 2013).

What kind of benefits for parents? A decrease in parent-reported stress. An improved parental perception of the parent-child relationship quality.

What kind of benefits for children? A decrease in social stress. A decrease in anxiety. A decrease in sense of inadequacy. A decrease in depression. An improved child perception of the parent-child relationship quality. An increase in self-reliance. An improved self-esteem.

What beautiful, important benefits come from spending time together.

Family leisure time can look like many things—playing catch in the backyard, going for a bike ride, golfing, playing board games, cooking, doing arts and crafts, tickling children, reading together, going on a nature hike, etc. Active leisure, which typically involves an activity or physical exercise, is usually recommended above passive leisure, such as television watching and playing video games. Nonetheless, the crucial element of leisure is that it is enjoyable to all members of the household who are participating. When accomplished, it has the potential to improve the well-being of the whole family.

So, as this semester and 2017 closes out, I wish you all much enjoyable leisure time with your family…and that you feel not a bit of guilt for taking time to play.

Reference:

Coyl-Shepherd, D. D. & Hanlon, C. (2013). Family play and leisure activities: correlates of parents' and children's socio-emotional well being. *International Journal of Play, 2* (3), 254-272.