

## AWARENESS

Awareness is being vigilant, watchful, knowing, mindful. In this blog, I am asking you to be aware of the influence "screen time" has on your family. By "screen time," I mean TV, computer, tablet, iPad, smartphone, video games, DVDs --all the things your children can see and will see in the 16 hours or more in their day time hours. Our families are being controlled by these images rather than controlling their use to the detriment of family life.

The more "screen time" spent with digital images, the less likely your children will want to be in school. The more time they spend with video, the more likely they are to want to stay home, to be entertained. The more time your children spend in these ways, the more likely they are to have learning problems, to be less motivated in school, to be uncooperative and aggressive both in school and at home.

Temptations posed by technology seduce parents and "quiet" children, stifling creativity, curiosity, respect, thinking and communication skills. Parents find themselves caught in a "technology tsunami" themselves (Family Media Literacy: An Imperative for Today's Children by Gloria M. DeGaetano) modeling obsessive screen behaviors by texting, downloading, and spending hours communicating on social media.

*64% of babies and toddlers are watching TV or videos, averaging slightly over two hours. {every day} (Rideout, 2011)*

Excessive "screen time" causes neurological damage by squelching personality, social skills, and imagination.

We are being controlled by visual images:

- 1) Companies saturate families with advertisements for certain products and devices to persuade you that you need or think you need.
- 2) Community standards are being eroded to the point that they no longer support parents to reiterate and reinforce family values.
- 3) Corporations undermine parental responsibility and authority.
- 4) Lack of relevant information and a pattern of misinformation keep parents in a state of confusion, not allowing them time to think and evaluate on their own.
- 5) "Screen machine" culture turns attention to mindless content, downplaying analysis and other higher-level thought processes.
- 6) "Screen machine" culture pushes a "machine-like" view of the world, treats people as objects and promotes a "quick-fix" as the only way. We have known for a long time that to solve life's problems in TV time has an influence on the amount of patience and time it takes to solve "real-life" problems.

(Thanks, Ms. Gaetano, for helping us to understand "screen time" and "screen machine.")

Excessive screen time is robbing us of our most valuable asset--time to DO things, to get out into a beautiful world, to move and enjoy activities as families. Control, consciousness, strong intention and careful attention must take precedence over mindless use and half-hearted, inconsistent enforcement of rules in the time and use of technology.

Technology is a marvelous gift if it is used at specified times for specified purposes.

Be in control, parents, and do not let your family be controlled by these "screen machines."