

## **Balance Grows Learning**

Be consistent in providing balance in your own and your children's lives.

Balance use of your children's time between digital and exercise. Even though your children may be fascinated with their new digital devices, you are in charge. Set a time limit on how much they can use their iphones and tablets. Monitor the apps they use. Then send them outside without their new "toys." Take them for a walk, bike ride or game of soccer. Teach them to "deep breathe" to get the wonderful unpolluted air this area offers.

Help them to balance their time between digital entertainment and online learning. There are so many free apps that help them to gain knowledge. Parents and grandparents, learn with your children. You may not know how to operate all the programs on your computer, but you can encourage your children and grandchildren to help you locate information and knowledge using a computer or laptop YOU have received as a gift. Education is not just getting the paper qualification; it is about lifelong learning. Parents and grandparents can learn and help their children learn without breaking the bank.

Balance children's time with people. Family is important, and the time spent with family creates bonding that will carry them through their future lives. Parents need to arrange time with their children such as local "field trips," games and travel to help children learn about others, to visit grandparents and to enjoy the company of extended family. "Cousins are connected heart to heart. Distance and time can't keep them apart." Help them to treat their friends as "cousins," but not to neglect their family.

Help them enjoy other gifts they get for birthdays and holidays, not just the digital devices. Playing with their toys develops their imagination. Toys help children to focus their attention and stimulate cognitive development. Toys contribute to children's personal growth and may interest them in hobbies that could turn into businesses in their forthcoming lives. Building blocks and legos may develop new architectural ideas and drafts. Playing with the "Monster" dolls may help girls know they don't have to be raving beauties to realize their value as female. After all, children are developing human beings, future innovators and organizers.

Balance their use of the money they receive between wants and needs. Children may want to spend all of their money on entertainment. Teach them to save, share and then spend. Teach them to delay gratification, not to spend now when they may want or need something far more satisfying later. Your money habits as parents have a strong influence on your children's money habits even when they are very young. Children as young as seven years old can understand "Do you really need that now? Do you really want candy now when you can save for a "Mickey hat" when we go to Disneyland?"

Providing balance in your own and your children's lives may be worth consideration and time.

*When we have a good balance between thinking and feeling...our lives are always richer for it.*

Yo-Yo-Ma