

## FLIP THE SWITCH ON SCREEN TIME



*By Daniel W. Hatcher, National Out-of-School Time Advisor, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, in collaboration with the National Recreation and Park Association and the National AfterSchool Association.*

Did you know that in addition to improved health, physical activity actually supports better learning in school? When kids are physically active, they perform better academically, have better attendance, and their behavior improves. Awesome, right?

That's why the National AfterSchool Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards reference "not permitting access to television or movies" and encourage out-of-school programs to provide opportunities for physical activity, rather than screen time. By the way, screen time just means time spent on television, the Internet, and mobile devices. Here's the deal: What's important about this standard is limiting unnecessary screen time. It's about ensuring that if screen time is used, it is balanced with physical activity time. Are you ready to flip the switch on screen time? Try one (or all) of these tips!

Even if your program is technology-based or you use a TV for a campaign such as anti-bullying, **TAKE REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAKS.** Use task cards for break ideas. Why not have a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and physical activity fair to showcase creative ways to combine technology and movement?

**USE SCREENS FOR MOVEMENT.** Try Fit for a Healthier Generation videos. If students are interested in videography, encourage them to make their own version. If they need ideas for activities, encourage them to pick from Classroom and AfterSchool Energizers.

**NEVER USE SCREENS AS A REWARD.** It's easy to default to using screen time as a reward, often with unhealthy foods. Tools such as Constructive Classroom Rewards provide a list of alternatives.

**SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.** Research shows that most parents do

not set rules for watching TV, playing video games, or using the computer. Share screen-time practices with families. Send home physical activity ideas such as Activity Works – At Home.

**EXPLORE YOUR CREATIVITY.** Forget the days when having a substitute teacher or a rainy day meant watching a movie! Find inexpensive and easy-to-use physical activity games in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Resource Database. Give staff the support they need. Add learning a new game to your next staff meeting. Staff will have more fun and leave with a new tool.

**BE HONEST WITH CHILDREN ABOUT FOOD ADVERTISING.** Seeing snack foods, candy, soda, and fast food on TV affects all of us. Start the conversation using the empowerme4life activity My Alternatives to Screen Time (page 78).

For more resources to flip the switch on screen time and get kids up and moving, **VISIT HEALTHIERGENERATION.ORG.**

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**SEE MORE AT:** <http://naaweb.org/resources/item/362-flip-the-switch-on-screen-time>

### OPENING DISCUSSION

What stood out to you as you read the article?

Why is this content important?

What tips would you add?

What other thoughts or questions do you have about the article?

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Make a list of the favorite activities of the kids in your program. Write each activity that doesn't involve physical activity separate sheets of paper and hang them around the room.

Rotate around the room brainstorming and charting ideas for integrating movement into each activity.

Share ideas for incorporating physical activity in small indoor spaces. Try out the ideas.

### CLOSING REFLECTION

Do a rating scale reflection. Think about today's discussion and use the following rating scale and movement:

1 - you still have doubts about the material and implementation – stand to the left side of the room

3 - you're still learning but think you've got it – stand in the center of the room

5 - you're ready to start implementing this tomorrow – stand to the right side of the room

What contributed to choosing the rating you did?

# **CERTIFICATE** of PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## **FLIP THE SWITCH** ON SCREEN TIME

\_\_\_\_\_ **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS, EARNED BY:**

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### **CONTENT INCLUDED:**

Activity Alternatives to Screen Time • Incorporating Physical Activity Across the Curriculum

**FACILITATOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

| What are two things that can be done to reduce the amount of screen time?

- a.
- b.

| What are two ideas for adding more physical activity into your program?

- a.
- b.

| How will flipping the switch on screen time benefit the kids in your program?