



EMPOWER

Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2016

Greetings

Happy February, Empower Friends!

In this month's issue, we'll take a closer look at Physical Activity and Screen Time, Empower Standard 1. As we work closer with licensing, we have learned that there is some confusion about this standard. In February, we often think of Valentine's Day, flowers, cards, and chocolate. Here's your challenge: include 'heart health' to the list by adding physical activity! Keep the chocolate in check by eating dark chocolate with flavonoids in moderation. Many of you also ask how you can get your three hours of annual training on Empower topics. This training does not have to be from ADHS. As long as it is related to the topic of one or more of the standards and documented per licensing requirements, you are in compliance. We will list several ways to find training all over the state. For you future farmers out there, pay attention to the Nutrition section, but you'll have to move quickly!

Bonnie

**Note: I was out of the office from December 10 through February 1, getting a new knee! I've got lots of catching up to do, but let me know if you need something!*

Nutrition - Farm to Preschool

The [Farm to School movement](#) as well as the Farm to Preschool movement, have become very popular lately. There is more and more in the news about buying local produce, buying fresh and cooking at home, farmers' markets, and tending a garden of all shapes and sizes. From square foot to raised bed to container gardening, there is something for everyone as we try to eat healthier. [The 8th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference](#) is held in Madison, Wisconsin, from June 2-4 this

year. They are offering scholarships for early care and education providers, food service workers, and persons of color, among others. The scholarship is for registration only, in most cases. If selected, you would likely be responsible for transportation, hotel and other costs. But hey, there's a chance! You must hurry! The application deadline is February 29, 2016. You can access all of the information, including the application, on their [website](#).

In the meantime, take a look at what the [Southwest Colorado Farm to Preschool project](#) is doing. We know that when children help to grow and / or purchase and / or prepare food, they are much more likely to eat and enjoy it! Here is a [bookmark](#) that a program in California made to remind parents and children about eating fruit and vegetables! Look around and get new ideas! Do you need some help getting started? Just ask!

Physical Activity (PA) Standard Highlight



Standard 1 reads “Provide at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity (teacher-led and free play) and do not allow more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity at a time, or more than three hours of screen time per week.” Now, let’s pick that apart to figure out what that is supposed to look like!

60 minutes - This is based on a full day, or 8 hours, in child care. If your program is half-day, you would adjust that time to provide at least 30 minutes. In the example of a full-day program providing at least 60 minutes, the activity can be: indoor, outdoor, or both; all at one time, or broken into chunks throughout the day. Best practice for developmentally appropriate PA for young children is daily play outdoors, active play options inside the classroom, the use of few transitions, and the use of large blocks of time. How do you schedule your daily physical activity?

Daily Physical Activity - What does this mean? What does ‘teacher-led’ and ‘free play’ mean? One thing that you can be sure of in early care and education is that we are all different! That’s part of what makes us unique. We all use different terms such as free play, child choice, work time, center time, and child-initiated as well as teacher-

led, teacher directed, structure time, etc. The label doesn’t matter as much as the activity that is occurring. First, let’s look at ‘teacher-led.’ All children benefit from trying new things and participating in challenges so they can grow.

Teacher-led simply means that the teacher or caregiver leads, facilitates, provides the materials, opportunity, time, space, and modeling for the activity to occur. It may be a round of Ring Around the Rosie, a series of different steps on a balance beam, a game of chase, an obstacle course,

throwing at a target, a parade, a walk to the playground on tiptoes, or many other choices. Does every child have to do it at the same time? No. Does every child have to do it at all? No. The benefits of providing teacher-led activities are many. Plan for skill building. Meet child-related or program goals. Provide new and interesting challenges. Encourage supervised risk taking. Provide instruction. Tell them and show them how to do it. Then, DO IT WITH THEM! Have fun!

Free play comes more naturally. Often, a large part of a young child’s day is driven by their own interests and choices. The teacher or caregiver still has a responsibility to create a safe and stimulating learning environment, but the children often decide what to play with and for how long.

Here’s a tip: You may want to provide some free play before attempting a teacher-led activity. Often, children are more cooperative if they’ve had some time to make their own choices. If you see boredom setting in, arguments, or discontent, this may be a good time to propose a teacher-led activity.

PA Standard Highlight: Screen Time (continued)

Sedentary time means: inactivity; seated; still. You've probably heard that 'children learn through play' or 'children learn by doing.' Most young children want to be active. Creating large portions of the day where children must be sedentary is not healthy or natural for their development. Standard 1 reads 'no more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity at a time.' Most young children can't sit more than 15-20 minutes before they need to be up and actively engaged. Obesity is a crisis in our culture. Besides nutrition, physical activity is the other major component to preventing or treating it. The Empower Standards can help children live healthy lives and learn healthy habits while they are young. When your licensing surveyor visits your program, they use a checklist to assess your implementation of the Empower Standards.

A few other confusing terms are **moderate** and **vigorous** physical activity. Use this as a rule of thumb: Most people are able to talk or hold a conversation during moderately intense activities. By comparison, holding a conversation or saying more than a few words before stopping to take a breath is more difficult during vigorous activities. How would you categorize the following activities? Gardening, dancing, walking, uphill hiking, swimming, running, house cleaning, and jump roping? Can you do these and have a conversation? Sing a song? Think about heart health. Hey, that goes right back to this being February, the month of hearts!

The last piece of Standard 1 is 'no more than three hours of screen time per week.' Well, what exactly is **screen time**? Does this mean television? Yes. How about movies? Yes. Even educational television

and movies? Yes. Computers? Tablets? iPads? Smart Boards? iPhones? You see how it can get confusing. Beyond television, screen time is a relatively new issue to deal with in early care and education settings. Some programs wouldn't dream of having a TV in a classroom while others have relied on too much TV for years. We all use technology and it's a valuable tool for us. Very young children now 'swipe' to read a book. (Does that meet the book handling skills criteria for 'knows how to turn the page')? Did you know that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends NO screen time for children under two years of age? Who's broken that rule? (I sheepishly raise my hand thinking about my own granddaughter.) Sometimes there are exceptions. What about the child who needs assistive technology? What about a very lively, active and social *Wii game* or the *Dance Party Video for Kids* for the after-school program? My guess is that kids get plenty of screen time at home, but they don't always have opportunities for quality social interactions, learning materials, and supportive teacher caregivers. No more than three hours of screen time per week!



Additional Information on Screen Time

- What does [Let's Move! Child Care](#) say about screen time?
- [How True Are Our Assumptions about Screen Time?](#)
- [Uncharted Territory: 10 Technology Tips for Preschool Parents](#)
- [Did Your Children Receive Tech Gifts? What to Keep in Mind As They Play](#)

This was a particularly fun article to read, as it was written by Rhian Evans Allvin, Executive Director of NAEYC. More importantly, however, is that Rhian is one of us! She is the former head of First Things First, a long-time Arizonan, and a mom to three young children. How interesting to hear her thoughts on using technology with her own children, how it enhances their lives, and the cautions she recommends.

Opportunities

For training and professional development opportunities, please check the following organizations using these links. Many of the trainings are related to Empower Standards and can satisfy Standard 8, 'Ensure that staff members receive three hours of training annually on Empower topics.' Remember, as long as you have proper documentation for licensing, your trainings can come from a variety of sources.

[Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence \(AzCASE\)](#)

[The Early Childhood Bulletin](#) and [Training Catalog](#)

[ADE Early Childhood Unit](#)

[Better Kid Care \(online\)](#)

[ADHS Child Care Video + Study Guide \(updated versions coming soon!\)](#)



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