



## GREETINGS MCCPIN MEMBERS

In times of stress, like the one we find ourselves in now, we need moments of joy. Most of us are dealing with a lot of extra pressure. Some of us are under financial stress as a result of the outbreak. Others are worried about family members getting sick or getting sick themselves. There's a culture of fear and uncertainty out there which lends itself to feelings of anxiety and depression.

Coping with these feelings in a healthy way will help you and the children you care for be stronger. Spending time outside enjoying nature is one of the fastest ways to improve your health and happiness. It has been proven to benefit your mental health. Getting 'into' nature isn't just about getting outside, it's also about incorporating nature play and appreciation of the environment into your day.

"Take Chances! Make Mistakes! Get Messy!" These famous words by "The Frizz" on The Magic School Bus have inspired children and me to be daring and fearless with learning. After all, this is the best way to discover new things.

Summer is finally here! It's the perfect time to go outside, sit back with your favorite ice cream, bask in the sun, run through the sprinkler, read your favorite book- or maybe the MCCPIN newsletter. Enjoy!

*Brenda Novack*

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Mission of the Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN) is to support, promote, and strengthen the profession of licensed family child care, thereby enriching the lives of providers, children, families, and communities.

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# Screen Dependency Disorder: The Effects of "Screen Time" Addiction

Adapted from Healthy Living Article

Our school-age children have just completed two to three months of distance learning with many school districts relying on screen time to learn and reinforce curriculum. Have you been noticing an increase in school-age children wanting more screen time this summer?

The next time you leave your house and venture off into a public place, take a minute to look around. If we're living on the same planet, it won't be long before you see a child with eyes glued to a screen almost as big as his or her face, whether a preschooler or a school-age child.

While we have witnessed some incredible technological advancements in the 21st century, parents have realized that handing a child their smartphone or tablet is a convenient solution for boredom or temper tantrums. However, this thing called "screen time" is creating brand new mental health and behavioral problems in young kids. Some of them cry, some of them break things, and some even threaten suicide.



## SCREEN DEPENDENCY DISORDER: EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME EXPLAINED

Whether kids are playing video games or using smartphone apps, there is a growing mountain of evidence suggesting that young boys and girls are exhibiting addictive behavior. Why? Largely because of extensive exposure to (unregulated) screen time.

Whereas adult brains are more developed, children's brains are susceptible to significant changes in structure and connectivity which can stunt neural development and lead to a screen dependency disorder. Other classifications of screen dependency disorder are:

- Internet addiction disorders
- Internet gaming disorder
- Problematic internet use
- Compulsive internet use
- Pathological video game use
- Video game addiction
- Pathological technology use
- Online game addiction
- Mobile phone dependence
- Social network site addiction
- Facebook addiction

Addiction is a term increasingly used to describe the growing number of children engaging in a variety of different screen activities in a dependent, problematic manner.



## 8 MAJOR SYMPTOMS OF A SCREEN DEPENDENCY DISORDER

Do you have children in your child care exhibiting the following symptoms?

- Preoccupation
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Increasing tolerance of violence and adverse behaviors
- Failure to reduce or stop screen activities
- Loss of outside interests
- Continuation despite negative consequences
- Lying about extent of use
- Use to escape adverse moods

Are these symptoms present during their screen time – especially on the internet and video games – and do these symptoms compromise their ability to function?

## WHAT TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME IS REALLY DOING TO OUR KIDS

A Family Life and Child Development specialist and Early Childhood Education consultant noted that screen dependency disorder may lead to insomnia, back pain, weight gain or loss, vision problems, headaches, anxiety, dishonesty, feelings of guilt, and loneliness.

Ultimately, however, the long term effects of these symptoms can be as severe as brain damage. In fact, multiple studies exploring the effects of screen dependency disorder have proven that children's brains shrink or lose tissue in the frontal lobe, striatum, and insula; these areas help to govern planning and organization, suppression of socially unacceptable impulses, and our capacity to develop compassion and empathy, respectively.



## 5 TIPS FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE A SCREEN DEPENDENCY DISORDER

The American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations for children's media use:

1. For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting. Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
2. For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
3. For children ages 6 and older, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.
4. Set ground rules early and enforce them by designating media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.
5. Stay in the conversation by having ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

# Play Together Stay Apart

Article adapted from TRUCE with edits by Linda Schesso and Deloris Friske

Summertime is the perfect time for children to get outside and play, especially when child care providers need to consider safe distancing of children. Since summer break started early, when this newsletter reaches you, maybe a few ideas might be helpful to navigate the remainder of the summer.

Children love water and what a perfect activity on a hot day. Digging in cool, slippery mud might not be a provider's idea of fun but maybe remember back to your childhood days if you had mud play as an activity and that special feeling of digging in cool, slippery mud. Chalking up a sidewalk or driveway with games, original drawings, or reviewing letters and numbers is a favorite for many children. Did you plant a garden with the children? The results may be plentiful as this newsletter arrives.

To lessen screen-based entertainment, TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment), created ideas for families which can easily be transferred to a family child care setting. The suggested activities use free to inexpensive materials that are readily available such as sand, water, cardboard, bubbles or string. Unlike specialized toys, open-ended materials like these offer endless opportunities for rich, creative, and on-going play. The activities provide opportunities for children to learn skills such as cooperation, turn taking, and problem-solving. Put away the screens and get playing for the remainder of summer!

With outdoor play being easier to distance child care children, read on for some ideas to consider.





## WATER PLAY ACTIVITIES

Water is a simple, everyday material which can be turned into endless hours of creative child's play, especially during the hot days of summer. Children enjoy "painting" with water. Fill a small bucket with water and provide paint brushes or roller. The water darkens the surface temporarily and makes it look like a fresh coat of paint. Try a variation by first doing a chalk drawing or lettering a message and paint water on the chalk for a different chalk effect. Try a car wash for your plastic riding toys or to wash any other outdoor play equipment.

Water based games such as "Dribble, Dribble, Drench" (a variation of "Duck, Duck, Goose") and water balloon catch are fun for school age children. Buy the self-sealing water balloons you fill with hose to save your preparation time.



## MUD PLAY ACTIVITIES

Mud offers another medium for outdoor play which may not be as appealing to family child care providers. Ingredients: dirt and water. Maybe try sand and water for an easier to clean-up version or plan it for a day when you intend to use the sprinkler for outdoor clean up. Mud is a free, open-ended material that can offer a deeper, more creative play experience. What can you do with mud? A mud kitchen outdoors with pots, pans, bowls, and spoons will be perfect to make mud pies. Mud handprints on heavy paper or on a sidewalk you can rinse when the activity is completed with a hose are another idea. Add glitter for fancy mud play.


## CHALK PLAY ACTIVITIES

A box or two of chalk can provide hours of fun and incorporate your summer review of the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors for the pre-school child as well as concepts such as fat and thin chalk or long and short chalk. Take your toy cars and trucks outdoors and draw roads on the sidewalk or driveway. Create a hopscotch game board, a giant checker board, or play tic-tac-toe.. Use colored paper plates as the checkers. Wet a piece of paper with water and then draw on it with chalk. What happens?



For more activity ideas and play resources from TRUCE, click [HERE](#) to visit their website.





**Social distancing in childcare seems like a contradictory concept where hugs and high fives are a typical part of the day, but by using your imagination and these fun games, you can keep your kids safely together.**

## NOODLE TAG

Do you have pool noodles in your child care? The foam noodles are usually between 52 and 58 inches, just shy of five feet. What an easy way to reinforce the 6 feet social distancing.....a little more than a noodle away! Use the noodles to tag the other person.



## SWAT THE FLY

Find a coloring page of a fly on the internet. Print and put on either a piece of thick paper (such as a tablet back) or I have used a frisbee. Secure it with contact paper. Attach a heavy cord. Have one child run with the fly while the other children try to swat it with their fly swatter pool noodles.



## OUTDOOR DOUGH

Bring the playdough outside and use it to explore textures of outdoor elements like bark, leaves, and rocks. Add faces onto tree trunks, or make a 'dough' man in snowman style. The possibilities are endless- just don't plan on reusing the dough.





# Splash Into Summer!

Summer is a time to turn on the faucet, break out the hose, and get wet! There is nothing more refreshing on a hot sunny day than a splash in cool water. Turn up the tunes, pull up a lawn chair and try some of these fun ideas to turn a summer day into a soak-fest.

## 1. Toys Go Swimming

Fill a kiddie pool, water table or shallow plastic tote with water and add utensils you might find in your kitchen: strainers, funnels, bowls, measuring spoons, baster, egg beater, and measuring cups. To make it more interesting, add small toys like boats, cars, people, or animals.

## 2. Painting with Water

Give the kids a bucket of water, a plastic paint tray, variety of brushes, and paint rollers. You can have fun painting the fence, the sidewalk, the house, or the slide. Watch to see how long it takes to dry (and what happens if it gets wet again)!

## 3. Wet Chalk Art

Place chalk in a container of water for an hour until soft and watch it as it's transformed into bright and vibrant colors. You can use it as body paint or create art work on the lawn and sidewalk. Or try sprinkling chalk dust on the ground and using water to create chalk paint.

## 4. Homemade Slip & Slide!

Create a homemade slip & slide in the back yard using a camping tarp, garden hose, and a bottle of shampoo, hair conditioner, or baby oil to make it slippery. To get a different sensory learning experience use shaving cream on the tarp, let the kids draw, write their name, or even roll in it.

## 5. Bring the Water Park Home

Turn your swing set into a water park by putting a sprinkler near the bottom of your swing set and transform your plastic slide into a water slide by placing a kiddie pool at the bottom! The kids will love slipping and sliding their way to the bottom.

## 6. Kiddie "Car Wash"

Let the kids give the bikes and trikes a good cleaning by transforming the sprinkler into a car wash! Set up sprinkler on or over the driveway, and give everyone sponges, dish towels, and a little bit of soap to give it the full effect of the car wash.

## 7. Dancing in the "Rain"

Bring the dance party outside and incorporate a sprinkler. Crank the summer tunes and let the kids go wild by jumping, running, and dancing their way through summer. For a twist try "Freeze Dance" in the sprinkler!

I hope these activities will bring you and your kids joy! This article was written from 20 years of experience in early childhood and are activities I have used over the years.

Brenda Novack, MCCPIN President



# Into the Unknown

by Melinda Hed

Something happens to me when I'm outside. Somehow leaving behind ceilings allows stress and worry to lift off of my shoulders and float away. There's this intangible lightness that comes from being outdoors. I just feel... good. And if it works for me, and I see the same in my child care kids, why is it that we spend so much time indoors? Well, this year, I've vowed to change that. I've promised to tip the scales heavily in favor of fresh air: To experience all the wonder of the unplanned, and the beauty of the chaos that is nature.

This spring I put together "Adventure Packs" for each of the kids: just a drawstring pack with a journal, and art supplies. Pretty simple- "No overthinking allowed," I told myself. And we set off into the unknown with no plan or expectations, and opened ourselves up to explore whatever lay ahead.

Hidden beneath their safe canopy, this wild strawberry patch was almost invisible! We noticed how tiny they were compared to the grocery store berries and opted to leave them for the animals.

No rules journalling happened right on the ground. Some made collages with the wild flowers they found. Others drew pictures. One clever boy noticed he could glue sand to his paper and it looked like glitter. Everyone was in charge of their supplies and their project, a responsibility children are not always granted.

While the "big kids" journalled, this toddler practiced his scissor grip and cutting skills on one of many dandelions.

These two were on the hunt for a very talkative cricket. Whenever they got too close, the chirper would get surprisingly quiet.

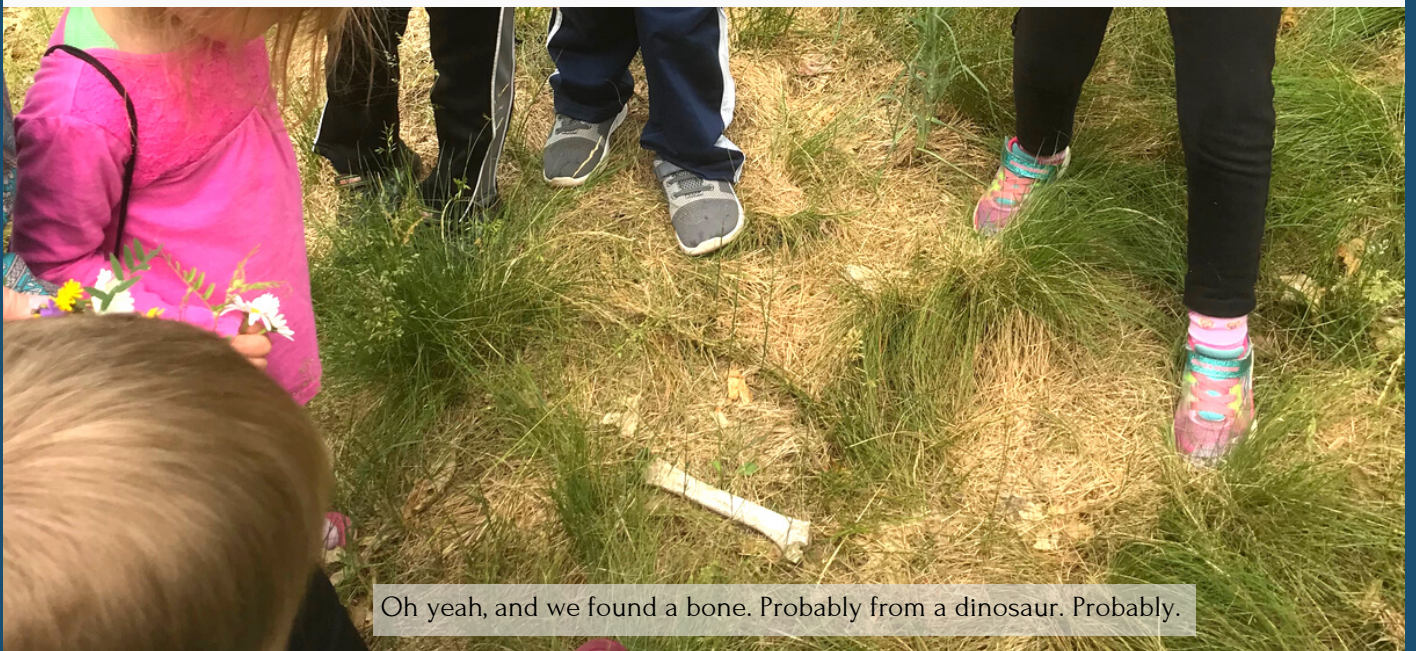




Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.



This grassy hill gave us all a chance to rest and observe all the action happening around us. While sitting in the soft grass and feeling the warm sun and slight breeze, we watched birds, bees, and butterflies flitting between blooms, heard crickets and crows, smelled stinky daisies and fragrant wood roses. The clock told us it was time to go, and we headed home feeling ten feet tall and light as a feather.



Oh yeah, and we found a bone. Probably from a dinosaur. Probably.





## MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS (AND PROVIDERS)

*This article was in the Winter 2020 Pacesetter Newsletter. Editors felt the content very adaptable between what advice is given to parents and what we providers can adapt. Substitute the word provider for parent.*

Parenting is generally stressful and parenting a child with mental health needs is even more so. Experts say that the best way to cope with this stress is for parents (providers) to actively engage in self-care.

“Self-care is important so that parents (providers) are healthy enough to function well, which includes being able to care for their child,” said Renelle Nelson, who coordinates PACER’s Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders project. “Research has shown that people who practice self-care are healthier, more effective, more decisive, and more resilient. Making self-care a priority is a good way to manage stress.”

Renelle said that the stress parents experience may be exacerbated by a lack of understanding for mental health issues. “You can’t ‘see’ mental illness,” she said. “Children with mental health issues don’t look any different than their peers. Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder can’t be seen, but they are very real. One in six children have a mental health disorder serious enough that it impairs their ability to function at home, school, or in the community.”

Renelle offers parents (and providers) the following self-care tips:

Understand and educate yourself about your child’s disorder and care and treatment options. “Knowledge really is empowering,” Renelle said. She advises parents (providers) to learn about their child’s disorder. “Knowing the signs and triggers of the disorder and familiarizing yourself with care and treatment options will help you feel more confident. PACER advocates can help. In addition, PACER publications and workshops offer valuable information.” (Editors note: The Center for Inclusive Care is another excellent provider and parent resource.)

Be honest with your child about their mental health disorder so they can be aware of how and when to get help. “Mental health professionals can advise parents (providers) about how to discuss their child’s mental health with them in age-appropriate language,” Renelle said. “Being transparent about mental health also helps end the stigma that secrecy invites.”

Activity can be a good antidote to the impact stress can have on a parent’s (provider’s) physical health. Take a walk, go for a run, exercise at the gym, or practice yoga. Physical activity helps release endorphins, a type of neurochemical that supports mental health, well-being, relaxation, and even sleep. The Mayo Clinic refers to exercise as “meditation in motion.”

*contd.*





Ask for help. “Tap into or build a support network,” Renelle said. She encourages parents to consider seeking out a mental health counselor or a support group. “Classes and PACER workshops can help,” she said. “Knowing that others are experiencing the same things helps you feel you aren’t alone.

(Encourage the Parent to....)

“Be willing to let others help you,” Renelle said. Sometimes good friends and family want to help but may not know how. The gift of time can be invaluable. “It can be difficult to find someone to care for your child when you need time to yourself. Ask those you’re closest to if they can help by watching your child if you need a night off or by having your child visit them if you’d like alone time at home,” Renelle suggested. In addition, summer camps and programs for children with mental health issues can be fun for your child and provide you with a needed break.

Let go of your guilt about what is happening to your (their) child. “No one wants to have a mental disorder, and it’s no one’s fault,” Renelle said. “Shame and guilt get in the way and take up emotional energy you could use for other things.”

Don’t overprotect your (their) child. “When you have a child with a mental health, emotional, or behavioral issue, it can be hard to let them grow,” Renelle said. “Find ways to encourage them and their efforts.”

Embrace your (their) child’s strengths. “Remind yourself of what your child can do, not what they cannot do. Every child has abilities, interests, and talents,” Renelle said. “Your child is a unique and special individual who also has a mental health disorder. That disorder does not have to define them.

“Every parent wants to take pride in their child. Celebrate your child’s strengths and successes and let them know you are proud of them.”

For more information about PACER’s Children’s Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project, go to [PACER.org/cmh](http://PACER.org/cmh). To speak to an advocate, call (952) 838-9000. Reprinted with permission from PACER Center, Minneapolis, MN. All rights reserved.

or check child care resources at



# Ready to Reopen?

*There's help!*



**SPCC**  
Society for the Protection  
and Care of Children

We have developed this infographic and tip sheet in partnership with our colleagues at the Child Care Counsel, to support childcare staff and directors in thinking through how to best support the social-emotional health and development of the babies in their care, through relationships, in the context of this pandemic.



**click to open PDF**

148 S. Fitzhugh Street  
Rochester, NY 14608  
585-325-6101  
info@spcc-roch.org



After nearly three months of temporary closure, many states are now reopening childcare centers.

As we begin to navigate yet another "new normal", early childhood educators will need to be more innovative than ever to balance the CDC guidelines with the age old issues of enrollment, staffing, and finances.

Our colleagues at Studio MLA Architects have put together this helpful presentation to assist center directors and staff accomplish the CDC directives in a cost efficient manner.



**click to open PDF**

Community Playthings  
PO Box 2  
Ulster Park, NY 12487  
800-777-4244





# FEELING THE CALL OF THE *Wild?*

Check out these resources to help you incorporate more nature into your program.



Nature Explore is a national nonprofit program of Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, which works collaboratively with a network of organizations throughout the nation. Our goal is to help nature become an integral, joyful part of children's daily learning. Nature Explore provides research-based workshops, design consultations and resources created to support programs as they continue to connect children and families to the wonders of nature.

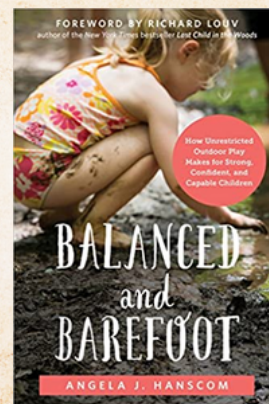
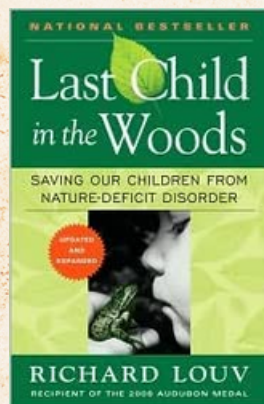
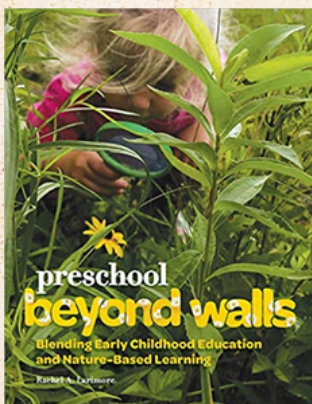
## natural start alliance

The Natural Start Alliance is a network of people and organizations that believe that all young children need frequent opportunities to experience, learn from, and care for nature and the environment through high-quality education.

## 1000 Hours Outside™

Do you enjoy a challenge? Connect with 1000 Hours Outside for just the thing! Here you'll be introduced to the challenge of spending at least 1000 hours outside for the whole year. You'll find inspiration, encouraging, great tracking printables, and much more!

Prefer turning pages to scrolling? Dig into these books chock full of research based info and tips.





# Meet Your Officers

## Brenda Novack, MCCPIN President

I would like to introduce myself to all of you who may not know me. I am Brenda Novack, President of MCCPIN. I am honored to have been elected to represent all of you as the next Association President.

I am a mother of 4 , Sarah is 28 , Danielle is 27, Nicole is 22 and Andrew 20. My husband and I have been married for 29 years. I enjoy singing, taking walks, and photographing sunsets and nature. My husband and I spend our spare time volunteering for the local Lions club , church, and other various community events. I have worked in both family childcare and a center care over the course of 20 years,. I like to call the 20 years the ice cream sandwich. I started out running a family childcare, then I went to work for a center so I could pursue my associate degree in child development, 10 years ago I opened up my current family childcare program.



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## Board of Directors

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#### West Metro Regional Representative

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Board of Director Meetings: No July 18, 2020 meeting. Next board meeting will be July 25, 2020 via Zoom. If you wish to be included in the notification, please email [mccpintreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mccpintreasurer@gmail.com) so the links can be sent to you. No August 15, 2020 meeting