Dear [how you address your families],

We would like to take this opportunity to share our approach to digital technology and screen media usage at [program name] and the reasoning behind it.

The mission of [program name] is to [insert mission here]. In congruence with our mission, [program name] is committed to being a screen aware organization, which we believe is a best practice for fostering young children’s optimal development. Screen awareness means paying attention to the impacts of screen media technologies on early learning and development.

Research shows that the brains of infants and toddlers are not wired to learn from two-dimensional screens and heavy exposure to screen media may disrupt physical, social, and language development. While there is some evidence indicating that preschoolers may learn from certain well-designed screen media, most apps and shows categorized as “educational” have no evidence to support the claim and take valuable time away from real-world experiences and learning.

Conversely, longitudinal research consistently shows us that young children flourish in environments that provide them with:

* Concrete, multi-sensory exploration of a three-dimensional world.
* Opportunities to participate in family and community life through purposeful tasks.
* Encouragement to become functionally independent in activities such as dressing/undressing, putting away their toys and belongings, caring for pets/plants/those around them.
* Time outdoors to connect with the natural world and move their bodies.
* Caregivers who model and engage in respectful and real-life communication with each other and their children.

We ask for your support in our screen aware practices at [program name] by bringing screen awareness to your home. Simply put, screen awareness places emphasis on real-world experiences and relationships in the early years. To this end, we believe educators and families are important partners when it comes to providing a child with the benefits of a screen aware childhood.

An example of screen awareness in action is to ask these critical questions before allowing your child to watch a show or engage with an app:

1. Why am I having my child watch this show or engage in an app/game on a screen? Is it for my convenience or for some real benefit I perceive my child to be gaining from it?
2. Who are the role models in the show/app, and what values do they teach?
3. Is this show/app trying to lure my child into buying something or to train my child to nag me to buy something?
4. How does watching this show/app affect my child's behavior? Does my child behave differently after engaging in an activity that did not involve a screen compared to after watching this show/app?
5. If a show/app claims to be "educational," how does it support this claim? Is the research done by the company selling the product or by independent reviewers?
6. How would my child be spending their time if they were not engaged in this show/app?

If you would like to learn more about the research behind the screen aware movement and additional ideas for practical actions you can take at home, we recommend [The Screen Aware Early Childhood Kit](https://fairplayforkids.org/pf/eckit/) from Fairplay’s Screen Time Action Network which provides research-based fact sheets and action plans for creating an environment of optimal learning for young minds. This collection of free, ready-to-use resources also outlines the ongoing costs of digital intrusion and how to practice a screen-aware mindset.

We hope this letter expends the partnership between [Early Childhood Center name] and your family in support of your child's optimal development and well-being. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Warmly,

[Your name]