

Public Notices

Screen time is not the answer to kid boredom

By Dr. Angela Houchin
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LEXINGTON - Summer is in full swing, but for many kids, the excitement of no school has already been tempered by their greatest nemesis: boredom.

Camps, vacations and trips to visit family are classic summer pastimes, but they don't take up every hour of every day; kids are turning to their TVs, tablets, phones and gaming devices to fill the void. While screens are part of everyday life and can help kids learn, connect and have fun, too much screen time can lead to such problems as sleep disturbance, behavior issues and exposure to inappropriate content.

While the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommendations for how families can implement a thoughtful, balanced approach to screen time, every family is different. Use the tips below to develop a media plan that works for your family.

Age is a factor. For older kids, set consistent limits to ensure that screen time isn't replacing sleep, exercise or in-person interactions. For kids under 5, limit screen time to about an hour of quality, age-appropriate programming and always watch it with them. For babies, except for occasionally video chatting with friends and family, avoid screens altogether.

Consider the content. Not all media is equal. Educational content and creative games can help kids learn and grow. But fast-moving or violent shows, or apps with ads and in-app purchases, may not be healthy. Choose high-quality content that fits your child's age and helps them learn or be creative.

Make it a family affair. Kids tend to mimic the behavior and habits that their parents exhibit so be a good role model. If you're on your phone for hours each day, they will be too. Talk to your child about what they're playing or watching and try to find a way to turn it into a real-world activity. Designate a time of day to be screen-free or replace solo screen time with a family movie night.

Start a conversation. Use screen time as a way to teach and connect. Ask questions like, "Do you think that could happen in real life?" or "What would you do in that situation?" Co-viewing and talking about what you saw helps children understand and become smart, thoughtful media users.

Let them be bored. Letting kids experience boredom is a positive thing. During boring times, they become creative and invent ways to entertain themselves. This fosters independence, problem-solving skills and an opportunity to discover new interests. Playing a video game might be a short-term solution, but learning how to manage unstructured time is an essential skill that will be stunted if they aren't allowed to be bored.

By creating healthy screen habits and encouraging a balance of digital and real-world experiences, families can make the most of summer downtime. A little planning, a lot of conversation and room for creativity can help kids build lifelong skills – and maybe even make some unforgettable summer memories along the way.

This column is by Dr. Angela Houchin, a pediatrician at Kentucky Children's Hospital.



Moving the fun indoors

When the weather won't cooperate, it's time to be creative. The last week of the summer camp at Greenup County schools was to have taken place at Greenbo Lake State Resort Park. But temperatures in the 90s took the action indoors. Still, ingenuity let them play putt golf and do other activities that were scheduled for the great outdoors.

Scams at all-time; here are tips to keep you safe

FRANKFORT – Scams have reached an all-time high in Kentucky, and the Office of the Attorney General is constantly working to stay ahead of con artists.

Gift cards ARE the most frequently reported payment method for fraud and scams. The Attorney General has partnered with the Kentucky Chamber and Kentucky Retail Federation to launch an initiative aimed at raising awareness about scams that require gift cards as payment. The new program provides retailers and businesses with signage to post near gift card displays warning of the dangers of gift card scams.

There are many other scams going around. The Attorney General's office offers these tips to protect yourself:

Hang up.

If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up. If you think the caller might be telling the truth, call back to a number you know is genuine. And, avoid robo-calls by registering your number on Kentucky's No Call list.

Do not pay upfront.

Scammers often offer prizes or threaten to take action against you, if

you don't pay a fee or provide your personal information. Legitimate businesses and government agencies will not threaten you for upfront payments.

Do not wire money or send reloadable credit/gift cards to people you do not know.

Legitimate businesses and government agencies will not require you to use these payment methods. It is almost impossible to get your money back after it has been wired, through services like Western Union. Reloadable cards like MoneyPak, Reloadit or other types of gift cards like i-tunes present the same problem.

Slow down.

Con artists prey on fear and want to scare you in to taking action very quickly. Before you issue payment or provide your personal information, verify the business by researching it online – verify their website, contact information, search for customer reviews and company policies.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If someone is offering you something for free or a prize you never registered to win, it is more than likely a scam.

KSP part of child operation

FRANKFORT - Last week, Gov. Andy Beshear announced the Kentucky State Police (KSP) Electronic Crime Branch recently took part in a national operation aimed at protecting children from online exploitation, which resulted in the arrest of 16 perpetrators across the commonwealth, bringing the number of predators arrested since 2019 to 325.

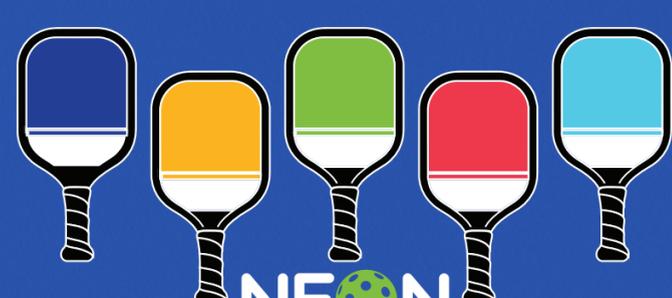
"We are committed to building a safer Kentucky, especially for our most vulnera-

ble children," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "I am proud of our Electronic Crime Branch team for working hard to take predators off the internet and off the streets so our children can be safe online and in their community." Operation Safe Online Summer, which was conducted throughout April by all 50 states, was coordinated by the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Lt. Mike Bowling, commander of KSP's Electronic Crime Branch, emphasized the im-

portance of collaboration and prevention in fighting online child exploitation.

"Operation Safe Online Summer is about more than arrests. It is about education, prevention and protecting the most vulnerable among us," Lt. Bowling said. "Our team works tirelessly to respond to cyber tips, pursue offenders and educate the public. Every child we protect and every victim we identify is a step closer to a safer online environment for Kentucky's youth."





NEON PADDLE BATTLE

PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Saturday, July 26

8 a.m. (check-in at 7:30 a.m.)

Ashland Tennis Center • 1300 Oakview Road

UK King's Daughters Orthopedics & Sports Medicine presents its first-ever pickleball tournament – an indoor glow-in-the-dark extravaganza. Games will be played with mixed doubles teams in a round robin format, and everyone plays teams in their level group. The top three teams in wins advance to the finals. All games are played to 11 (win by 2) and best 2 out of 3 games.

Entry Fee: \$25 per person

Includes a free t-shirt and fun giveaways



LEVELS

- 3.0 (Beginner)
- 3.5 (Average)
- 4.0+ (Advanced)

Register by July 20 at bit.ly/NeonBattle or scan the QR code





Happy Fourth of July!
Our office will close and reopen Monday

