



# MADRONA SCHOOL

## WALDORF EDUCATION

### Media Use and Madrona School Students

Madrona School works in partnership with families to lay foundations for a healthy childhood and to foster a strong sense of self a child can take out into the world. We strongly believe that one key element of this foundation is limited, or eliminated, media use, including television, movies, video games, computers, and other electronic media devices.

Children use all of their senses to soak in the world around them. While we recognize the necessity and usefulness of some media for teens and adults, electronic media can have a dimming effect on a child's normally vivid imagination, thereby diminishing a basis for learning and growth. Avoiding screen time allows children's imaginative play to flourish, unburdened by commercial imagery. At school, students' attention spans are strengthened through listening to ever-longer and more detailed stories. They maintain the use of all their senses, building skills in observation and reflection, skills they can take into the classroom as they grow. Keeping the press of adult themes and quick-flashing clips at bay allows them to grow at their own pace.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently re-issued a policy statement that children under 2 years old should have *very* limited media use, and that all young children should only use media in the presence of an adult. They also state that bedrooms should remain screen free. We support this statement, and we would further encourage Madrona School families to curtail electronic media use much longer, while children remain in grade school. Brain researcher Jane Healy discovered that exposure to screens tends to shut down the neurological circuits responsible for social interaction and deductive reasoning for children of all ages.



Madrona School acknowledges that screen media use falls within the domain of the family and all parents must decide for their children what is permissible and appropriate. We also recognize that there is a difference between a situation where media use is unlimited and one where parents carefully choose an appropriate show or movie now and then. That being said, we ask Madrona School families to respect the following:

\*No media use in the morning before school.

\*Avoid violence, commercials and adult programming in any format.

\*No media use before bedtime, as it can disturb a child's sleep life and disrupt a quiet evening routine.

There are many rewarding and

enjoyable alternatives to screen-media and Madrona School teachers will be happy to share ideas or suggest other alternative activities for your family. For more information and resources, please visit the websites for The Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood ([www.commercialfreechildhood.org](http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org)) and the Alliance for Childhood ([www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org)). Common Sense Media provides some research and reviews on current movies and media so you can make informed decisions for older children ([www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)). We also encourage parents to read *Simplicity Parenting* by Kim John Payne, for further inspiration and strategies to reduce the influence of screen media in our homes.

Madrona School strives to nurture well-rounded and balanced development. Engaging the whole child is a basic principle of Waldorf education. For more information, or to schedule a tour, please contact our school office at [enrollment@madronaschool.org](mailto:enrollment@madronaschool.org).

—revised January 2017