

# HERONS THRIVE

The Official Newsletter of Vineland's Mental Health Staff

## HOW LONG IS TOO LONG ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES?

The American Academy of Pediatrics has published recommendations that should serve as a guideline to families who want to regulate screen time. Children ages 2 to 5 should watch less than 1 hour of high quality programming each day. For children over the age of 5, parents should establish consistent limits on screen time. High quality programming that has the potential to enrich learning is okay as long as it's not detracting from activities that would have more developmental value. For example, even high quality digital content should not replace family meals, regular exercise, and quality sleep. Here are some recommendations that you could incorporate into your family's digital plan: (1) adults will model healthy media usage, (2) children will limit media exposure 1-2 hours before bed, and (3) the family will co-view media and have follow-up conversations about the content.

-Molly Toure, School Counselor

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TEMPER TANTRUM OR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS?

Temper tantrums are part of every child's development. They are normal between the ages of 1-3 and should decrease around age 5-6. Temper tantrums should not be confused with bad moods or a child's normal meltdown because he or she is hungry, tired or sick. A temper tantrum becomes a mental health concern when the behavior becomes dangerous to him/herself or others; it significantly impacts his/her daily activities (for example: behavior in school, daily routines and relationships with others) and it impacts family/home life where parents are unable to manage/control the behavior. Reach out to a mental health professional to obtain additional information.

- Beatriz De La Espriella, School Social Worker

## I'M WORRIED MY CHILD HAS ADHD, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you are concerned that your child might have ADHD, the first step is to talk with a healthcare provider to find out if the symptoms fit the diagnosis. You may also want to discuss classroom behaviors with their current teacher. ADHD is common and can be diagnosed in childhood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, or be overly active. Common characteristics of children with ADHD include: frequent daydreaming, squirming or fidgeting, talking too much, making careless mistakes, having a hard time resisting temptation/waiting, and/or difficulty getting along with others. It is important to note some symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity are appropriate for developing children. For example, kindergarten students are not expected to sit for 45 minutes, because developmentally they are unable to. This does not mean a child is hyperactive, rather they are typically developing and exhibiting normal characteristics.

-Lauren Zakaib, School Psychologist