

# CONNECT-FOR-MORE

## Unplug and Play: A Screen-Free Summer of Connection

**Summer is the perfect time to strengthen bonds with your child — and stepping away from screens can make that connection even stronger.** Research shows that excessive screen time is linked to sleep problems, attention difficulties, and lower academic performance (Twenge & Campbell, Prev Med Rep 2018). In contrast, face-to-face, hands-on activities support children's brain development, emotional well-being, and family relationships (NRC, NIM Shonkoff and Phillips, ed., ECD, 2000. NAP).

### Try these enjoyable, screen-free activities that enhance early learning:

#### Make a Meal or Bake Some Treats

Mixing, measuring, and kneading are more than fun; they build math skills, develop patience, and teach teamwork. Studies show that cooking with children improves math understanding and encourages healthier eating habits. (Fulkerson et al., Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act 2015)



#### Fix Broken Toys or Objects

Instead of tossing out a wobbly chair or broken toy, grab some tools and fix it with your child. Problem-solving builds confidence and teaches resourcefulness. Children involved in repair activities develop resilience and practical skills.

#### Explore Nature

Take a walk in the park, your backyard, or a nearby trail and observe birds, bugs, and plants. Ask questions like, "Why do leaves have different shapes?" or "What kind of bird is that?". Nature play reduces stress, boosts mood, and improves attention span. (McCurdy et al., Curr Probl Pediatr Adolesc Health Care 2010)



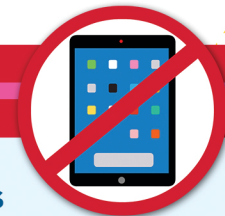
#### Read Funny Poems

Laughter strengthens bonds and makes reading engaging. Poetry helps build language skills, rhythm awareness, and memory. Sharing silly verses encourages positive reading habits that last a lifetime. (Rasinski and Zimmerman, Teaching Literacy 2013)



### Why Go Screen-Free?

- Boosts brain development
- Strengthens family bonds
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Encourages creativity and problem-solving



Try setting aside a few hours each day for hands-on activities this summer. Your child will benefit, and so will you.

**Let's make it a time for connection, curiosity, and creativity!**

