



# General media use in OSHC

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Research about children and media use in Out of School Hours Care has been conducted by Dr Karen Orr Vered, PhD over a three year study funded in part by the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services and Flinders University.

A full copy of the research paper 'Children and Media in Out of School Hours Care' is available at [www.decs.sa.gov.au/oshc/](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/oshc/).

As a result of the research four resource sheets have been developed to help make the most of electronic entertainment and information technologies and the social interactions they support in OSHC. The resource sheets aim to support OSHC staff, schools, operators and families to consider the importance of media play for children in the OSHC recreation and leisure setting and the effective management of media use in OSHC.

The resource sheets provide information to support, guide and assist children to become self monitoring, self regulating, responsible and confident media users.

### Benefits of media use in OSHC

- Children gain confidence with media through play, having opportunities to use media independently and with peers.
- Media play supports peer group play and the development of social skills such as cooperation, negotiation, turn taking and peer tutoring.
- Access to computers, the Internet and software can encourage the development of skills including literacy, numeracy and inquiry.
- Media play complements traditional play by providing opportunities for creative extension.
- Television, music, video games, DVDs and computers provide entertainment and educational opportunities.
- Children's media play in OSHC is more public, social and collaborative than at home.
- Media use in OSHC is different from school where children's time is often more structured and where they are unlikely to have access to television, video playback and music.
- Most OSHC services provide a combination of electronic technologies that support children's play and learning - television, music, video games, DVDs and computers.

### Comparisons of media use:

Media use in OSHC is unique. When and how media is used in OSHC is established by the children and based upon their interests, activities and group dynamics. Media use in OSHC is different from that in school where children's time is generally more structured and they are unlikely to have access to television, video playback and music.

- All video game play and computer use in OSHC is social; at home children often play video games and use computers alone
- 64% of children play video games in OSHC while 80% play them at home
- Less than 46% watch television in OSHC while nearly all children watch television at home
- 55% of children in OSHC used computers to complete school work or projects while only 20% of children used their family's home computer to do school work.

### Considerations for media use in OSHC

Media competency can be encouraged by collaborative use and social interaction around media. Children learn from each other and naturally monitor and regulate each other's activities. In OSHC two or three children are often around a computer working together on applications, swapping game hints and encouraging one another's efforts. Research has identified that aspects of peer tutoring, coaching, collaborative problem solving and conflict management are practiced by children during this time.

OSHC staff actively encourage children to engage in a range of activities as well as media activities - including sport, art and craft, board games, dramatic play, dance, special interest clubs and construction.

Media use in OSHC is planned to support children's development across a range of areas. Staff should encourage feedback from children and families about media activities and resources.

The recreation and leisure setting of OSHC provides opportunities for children to explore, play and be creative. Television, video, music, computers and digital cameras can be used to create art, dance, dramatic play, stories and games. The possibilities are endless and a range of software is available to encourage children to draw, record songs, write and with support even make movies.

Services should have a range of media resources and software to meet the range of developmental abilities of the children and their needs.

OSHC provides equitable access to computers that many children do not have elsewhere. This is particularly important for girls and children from low income families as research shows that children tend to acquire their advanced computer skills at home, and if they do not have access at home, they are less likely to develop these essential skills.

Children rarely violate the rules of media use at OSHC when those rules are made explicit to them. The public nature of media use in OSHC also encourages self-regulation, discussion and peer regulation.

Viewing television programs tends to be very limited as the television set is critical to so much other media use in OSHC such as video games and video playback, and most services have only one television. In order to ensure everyone has access to these resources, rules around length of turns and the amount of time spent on each medium need to be observed.

## Useful References

When selecting videos, DVD's and computer games OSHC staff should refer to the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board's Classification system as a guide (<http://www.classification.gov.au/>). OSHC services on DECS sites should refer to the video viewing guidelines outlined in the DECS Administrative Instructions and Guidelines, Section 3 paragraph 94, Section 1, Paragraph 141 and Department of Education and Children's Services [http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/policy/pages/OSPP/policy\\_index](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/policy/pages/OSPP/policy_index)

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The following references may be useful when developing policy & procedures for selecting and reviewing television, video and DVD programs.

### **Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF)**

<http://www.actf.com.au>

ACTF programs are generally highly recommended for use in OSHC. Many are made for use in schools and have supplementary materials that accompany the programs.

### **Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM)**

<http://www.metromagazine.com.au/atom/about.html>

ATOM may be able to assist you in developing recreational media activities. Many states have media education

associations with local contacts and these are listed on ATOM's website.

### **Office of Film & Literature Classification (OFLC)**

<http://www.classification.gov.au/>

Download the Film and Computer Game Guidelines from the OFLC website and have them on display publicly. The OFLC also maintain an online database of their classification decisions.

### **Department of Education and Children's Services Administrative Instructions and Guidelines (AIGs)**

<https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/doc/administrative-instructions-and-guidelines-aigs>

### **DECS Technology & Knowledge Management Services**

The DECS ICT Security Policy requires that acceptable use policies are in place for all users of DECS ICT facilities, including staff and students. Such policies "must be in the form of a written agreement, signed by staff, students and/or their parents/guardians (as appropriate), outlining the terms and conditions of use of DECS ICT facilities, and of online behaviour and access privileges, and consequences of non-compliance."

Due to the differing needs of individual sites, DECS has not mandated a common acceptable use policy. However, as such a policy is required for all schools, preschools and children's services sites this standard assists in the preparation of site-specific acceptable use policies. It describes what should be included, how it should be distributed and the rationale for having such a policy in place. This standard must be read in conjunction with the DECS Policy – ICT Security. The acceptable use agreement for DECS corporate staff can be obtained from the DECS website.

[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/Corporate\\_Acceptable\\_Use\\_a.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/Corporate_Acceptable_Use_a.pdf)

This may be appropriate for staff in schools, preschools and children's services sites.

### **DECS Policy – ICT Security**

[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS\\_Policy\\_\\_ICT\\_Security.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS_Policy__ICT_Security.pdf)

### **DECS Policy – Internet Access and Use**

[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS\\_Policy\\_\\_Internet\\_Acceptable\\_Use.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS_Policy__Internet_Acceptable_Use.pdf)

### **DECS Policy – Email Access and Use**

[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS\\_Policy\\_\\_Electronic\\_Mail.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/DECS_Policy__Electronic_Mail.pdf)

### **Office of the Privacy Commissioner: Guidelines on Workplace E-mail, Web Browsing and Privacy**

<http://www.privacy.gov.au/internet/email/index.html#Policy>

### **Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children**

[www.decs.sa.gov.au go to parents and Community>Health and wellbeing>Bullying and Harassment](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/go_to_parents_and_Community>Health_and_wellbeing>Bullying_and_Harassment)

### **NetAlert**

[www.netalert.net.au](http://www.netalert.net.au)