

Media and Child Development

"Imagination is more important than knowledge" – Einstein

Here is a list of the top Christmas toys for boys and girls for 2009

GIRLS	BOYS
Nintendo Wii and Wii Fit Webkinz Toys, Stuffed Animals and Purses Zhu Zhu pet hamster (electric) Hannah Montana Toys // Dolls Dora Links Doll (hook it up to your computer)	Nintendo Wii and Nintendo DSi Transformer Devastator / Battle Strikers Xbox 360 Ipods Legos

Camp Augusta Vision

To reclaim and foster the beauty, wonder, awe, potential, and innocence of childhood.

Take a good look over the lists above. Do you think that these toys have a positive, negative or neutral effect on a child's development? Year after year, the ratio of media based and electronic toys increases in prevalence on lists like this one. Reports over the last 5-10 years show that campers take in an average of 44.5 hours of media per week (not including cell phone or ipod use). When you consider that they spend six hours a day in school and hopefully sleep at least 8 hours a day this is how the numbers break down. Out of the 168 hours in a week, 30 are spent in school, 56 are spent sleeping (assuming the child is sleeping the recommended minimum of 8 hours a night, with 9 being healthy) then there is 82 hours remaining in the week; some of this will be spent traveling, bathing, eating, etc. So basically children are spending the majority of their free time using or being exposed to some form of media.

The list also shows gender framing - what is considered a boys toy and a girls toy. Have you ever seen an advert for Barbie where a boy was playing with the doll? Or an advert for Batman toys where a group of girls was playing with them?

Take another look at the list. Do you see a baseball, basketball, football? In fact, there is nothing on that list that requires any activity (other than the minor activity required while playing Nintendo Wii) and we wonder why the childhood population is experiencing high rates of obesity. If you want to be entertained, you could choose going outside, running around and playing with friends, or sitting in front of a TV or computer. The latter is certainly easier. This is by no means the only factor causing childhood obesity; it probably isn't even the main culprit, but you'd be hard pressed to argue that it played no role at all.

Various aspects of Camp offer children a different source of entertainment that they can take home with them (Playstation, pick up games, etc). They can take this newly learned entertainment anywhere because it doesn't need batteries or wires - all it takes is a little imagination. We don't have TVs, we eat a balanced diet and we spend all day playing in the company of others. The social nature of camp and play here also radically differs from the solo forms of entertainment and occupation children normally engage in. We are giving children a different way to learn and live as active participants in their lives. This is a vital part of our mission.

Video Games, TV and Human Development

- ✦ Media shapes our values.
- ✦ Media desensitizes us to images of sex and violence, whilst at the same time makes us hypersensitive to crime and creates a society of fear.
- ✦ Media re-enforces stereotypes of race, age and gender roles.
- ✦ Most media sources try to sell something. "You're not happy, or happy enough, unless you have this."
- ✦ You are not in control of what you see.
- ✦ We lose the power to entertain ourselves, and even to think critically for ourselves

Consider this: according to a former U.S Army officer it is very hard to get one human to kill another one. During World War 2 only 15-20% of riflemen would shoot an enemy that popped up in front of them. The government now uses lots of desensitizing methods to make their soldiers more efficient killers. One method used is to have soldiers play the video game *Doom*! Police forces use a simulator, very similar to the arcade game *Time Crisis*, to train them to shoot humans. They also watch war films and violent action thrillers.

Here is another thought, before the invention of TV or the internet or magazines children learned about the world through stories that were told to them by their parents, tribal leaders, the church, etc. These stories taught them many lessons about the concepts of right and wrong, social interaction, what was acceptable and expected. These stories have been replaced by media; if or when you have children do you want NBC, FOX or Microsoft telling them what to believe?

Intentionality: Music at Camp

Nutshell

- ✓ What goal/intention am I hoping to serve by using music / this song?
 - How is this goal balanced against the goals of anti-buzz, focus on nature?
- ✓ Is the intention of the group/audience unified? How do I know that?
- ✓ Order of preference
 4. Singing
 5. Live music
 6. Recorded music

Mood

- Jazz, modern rock, classic rock, hip hop, new age, classical...each of these produces a mood. Imagine Native Flute being played, or Walking on Sunshine via stereo. The “DJ” holds power over the mood created.
- When a mood is played for everyone, everyone is influenced more or less.
- If a given camper is feeling differently than the music, it is tough to swim against the strong current.
- Testing intention: would I be imposing, without consideration and agreement, a mood over the group/audience that wouldn't otherwise be present in them all? What might evolve without it?

Nature and human beings

- The forest and nature has a soundtrack already – listen to it carefully.
- Silence has a value in and of itself; it is not empty.
- Listening to one another is not something that is a refined and developed skill; it appears to be going the other way as life gets more cluttered and busy.
- Conversation, learning, and playing are becoming more difficult as people require things to help them in those endeavors.
- Happiness does not depend on music. Think cross-culturally and historically. Consider the Amish, who use nothing electronic whatsoever. They do play live music, and they are complete with it.
- Song exists in all cultures throughout time and place. Yet, singing is largely absent from modern American life. How songs are felt about was instilled by this culture, not innate.

Adding to life

- 30 years ago, a cordless phone was something for the very wealthy, and they worked horribly.
- Cell phone antennas used to grace the Mercedes and Bentleys, and the phones came in bags with a shoulder strap
- Having a screen in a car is a common option, and soon it won't be optional. The 45 hours of screen time for children does not include listening to music.
- iPods are projected to reach over 500 million sold by the end of 2011 (worldwide). That's 1 out of every 14 people on the planet! Other MP3 players are in addition to that number.
- There is a buzz to life . . . ask your campers when they are without electronics in their life on a daily basis.
- If campers don't experience what life is like without a background present, when will they ever do so?

Music as a tool

- Yes, it absolutely is. So are televisions, the internet, caffeine, sugar, walking, cars, . . .
- What can be gained by limiting some tools in service of other goals?

Music at camp

- When it is central and necessary to what is happening at camp, or in the cabin?

Central and Necessary	Not
-Music at a dance or in a talent show act -Embers – the song IS the point of the embers -Theme dinner - strings at classical Italian meal -Evening program – all engaged/similar intention -Singing camp songs almost always adds to camp	-Music played over a meal in the dining area -Cabin is doing a craft, with music played -Riding in a van/car anywhere -Music at an area of camp where something else is the focus – tea pagoda / hot tub / hammock village -Kitchen music is not to be heard outside of it

- Whenever possible, live music is preferred
- Examples of music balanced against anti-buzz and focus on nature
- Recorded music: For embers and cabin activities especially, an additional guideline: only all village (read: camp) wakeups of music are acceptable as the music washes over everyone, and the benefit of doing so must outweigh the benefit of more individual wakeups by other cabins/campers. Also, the sound is heard by one village stronger than another. Cabin activities – hard to imagine an appropriate use of recorded music -- ????

Lyrics / song choice

Appropriate	Not
-Love that inspires and engenders health / fullness	-Genet alia referenced directly or innuendo
-Community songs (Campfire song staples)	-Sex, direct or innuendo
-Hold to the higher self	-Love without substance / head over heels
-Inspire to the greater good	-Relationships – heightens
-Playful / fun	-Drugs / alcohol / smoking already high sensitivity
	-Focus on appearance as value / Objectification

- Would you take the subject of the song, explicit or implied, and have it as a positive evening embers? The difference with a more controversial song subject is that there is not a discussion with the whole camp that follows it.
- Politics – Republican / Democratic / Green / Tea Party. Stay clear of those and the likes. Instead, Camp Augusta focuses on Augustan values and experiences. Underneath positions are needs those positions are intended to serve.
- Religious songs – advocating a value/principle, then okay. Not okay when it is explicit of a particular, readily recognized religion that advocates exclusivity. Not when the song is advocating a religion or a particular god.
- Campers are over-stimulated and overexposed to many developmentally inappropriate topics and experiences. Camp is a haven. Camp is taking the red pill, so they can see the difference.
- HERO test: Would a professional role model approve of the message and content? Watch the modern HERO slide show, and read the staff manual page and see where you sit.
- Group sniff test – does a majority of the staff bristle at the song?

Song examples of camp appropriate

-Canoe song	-Linger	-Lion Hunt	-Circle game	-Imagine
-Prune	-Blue sky sunshine	-Boa constrictor	-Pooh Corner	-Redemption song
-On the loose	-Friend Ham	-Lion sleeps tonight	-Blowin' in the wind	-Rainbow Connection (Kermit)
-Big yellow taxi	-Puff magic dragon	-Country road	-Stand by me	-Lean on me
-Building bridges	-Let it be	-Celebration	-You got it (anything you need)	-That's what friends are for
-Teach your children	-Help from my friends	-Joy to the world	-Walking on sunshine	-Don't worry, be happy
-Princess Pat	-Boldness has genius	-Wonderful world	-Love is the 7 th wave	
-Beatles/Mosquitoes and the bed bugs	-What The World Needs Now Is Love	-Sound of silence		

Many (NOT all) songs by/in the following: “Rise up Singing,” The Beatles, most folk artists, Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkle, James Taylor, Musicals, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Tracy Chapman, Eva Cassidy, Indigo Girls, Dar Williams, Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, John Denver, Peter-Paul-Mary, Kenny Rogers, Tons of current/recent songs that fit the intentions

Write a song – be the creation, bring you to camp for the ages