HOMEWORK overload and classroom rivalry are "ruining" Australian children, an international education leader warned.

Professor Carla Rinaldi - president of the global Reggio Children movement, based in Italy - said children were relying too much on technological "apps" instead of their own ingenuity and imagination.

And she urged parents and teachers to give children the "greatest gift" - time.

"There is this obsession to pass from one activity to another," she said during a visit to Australia sponsored by the nation's biggest childcare chain, Goodstart Early Learning.

"It is ruining the children."

Professor Rinaldi said kids were suffering from performance anxiety.

"It is too competitive," she said. "It is making them anxious about their performance, and increasing disturbances (in behaviour).

"Children are collaborative, not competitive."

Professor Rinaldi said the "Slow Food" movement should be extended to "Slow Schools".

Too much homework and out-of-school activities robbed children of time to daydream.

"Above all, it takes away time for reflection," she said.

"Give children time. Give yourself time. Time is the greatest gift that a person can give."

Professor Rinaldi - who served as Adelaide Thinker in Residence this year - said children should not rely too much on technology, but treat it as "a tool, like a pencil".

"There is too much screen time," she said. "From an ethical perspective and in terms of shaping the mind it can be very dangerous. You consider anything is possible, because you have an app. Then you lose your own effort, the pleasure of discovery, the pleasure of fatigue, the pleasure of mistakes. We have to guarantee that children can use all their senses, to read, to play, to create."

Early Childhood Australia general manager Judy Kynaston said young children should spend no more than an hour a day in front of a screen.

She said digital technology could benefit children if they required movement, or interaction with other children or adults. But overuse could result in "unhealthy weight and a lack of social skills".

Kids First Children's Services director Sonja Walker, whose Sydney pediatric health clinic has treated 7000 children in the past seven years, said too much "screen time" was shortening kids' attention spans.

"Teachers are telling us that children are finding it difficult to persist at tasks because of the immediate nature of technology," she said.

"Children don't have that experience of persisting in a task, to research, to plan, to imagine and to dream of ideas.

"They want answers and they need it now.

"But using pen and paper sometimes does help children to think logically about what they are doing."

Ms Walker said some children were starting school with language and speech problems because they spent so much time playing games by themselves.

"We give them (screens for) something to do while Continued on page 2
Killing Creativity

we're busy, and we're not talking to them as much," she said.

"They're not engaging in social situations where they have to learn to liaise and negotiate with other children."

But Ms Walker said her own clinic used smartphone "apps" to teach children phonics, maths and behavioural skills.

Goodstart Early Learning chief executive Julia Davison said she was introducing elements of the Italian Reggio Emilia teaching methods throughout the 655 centres.

Rooms had been "de-cluttered" to better show off the children's own art work.

The director of Goodstart's Red Hill centre in Brisbane, Renee Mitchell, said the new approach was to "listen deeply to children and not just tell them how to do things".

"We have found that when children are involved in self-directed activities that interest them, they are more engaged, learn a lot more and display much more positive behaviour," she said.

Educational Apps

rED Writing - Teaches children ages 3 - 7 how to write the letters and numbers of the alphabet, the same way they are taught at school.

Maths Bingo - Kids answer maths questions and are rewarded with a game when they answer correctly.

Number Monster - teachers numbers 1-20 in 10 languages.

Bright and Beyond - activities for parents to play with babies and toddlers.

Pocket Phonics - helps children learn to read.

Math Farm - solve a maths problem and farm animals emerge.


7 Tips for Choosing Greener and Safer Toys

Child safety is not only the job of the parent at home, but also the child care provider where the child spends a good portion of time. As the parent child-proofs the house to stop the little ones from tumbling down the stairs or getting under the sink, the child care setting must also be safe for children. Have you taken a moment to consider which toys the kids are playing with? Some of them can be a toxic nightmare because of the materials used in production.

To play it safe, follow these tips to choosing safer and greener toys for the children in your care:

Natural Materials

It’s amazing how many toys are now made with synthetic materials. Slick to the basics: wood, cotton, wool, and felt. Going natural means that the children are less likely to come into contact with harmful materials.

Always read the label and check which resources from which the toy is made.

Anti-Materialist

You don't need to shower the children with toys. It's completely unnecessary and stifles creativity. Let them rely on their imagination to come up with toys and fun games. You can make fantastic things out of recyclable materials, such as cardboard boxes and bubble wrap. Buy fewer toys and re-purpose what you can. The less the children have, the more likely they are to get creative.

Durability

It's always worth paying that bit extra to get a high-quality toy that will last. Durable toys will pay off when they can be used year after year. Children test a toy's durability…to the extreme. Make sure it's up to the task. The last thing you want to do is fork out for repeated replacements.

Buy Local

If there are any small shops in your area that hand-make children's toys, buy something from them and reduce air miles! It's always good to support small businesses in your area.

Avoid Plastic

This is nigh-on impossible in this day and age, but try to avoid plastic where you can. If you do buy something made of plastic, make sure that it's labeled with a #2, #4, or #5. If the child is young, he or she WILL put the toy in their mouth. Always play it safe and stick with toys that can do no harm.

Do Not Buy Cheap Jewelry and Cosmetics

The children may think make-up and jewelry are fun for playing grown-up, but avoid any cheap cosmetics for kids, as they are made from some of the worst materials you can find that are aimed at kids. Let the children be children, and actively dissuade them from cosmetics at this age. Stress the importance of being pretty on the inside.

Sign Up For Recall Alerts

Check regularly on recalls.gov, to stay aware of any products that are unsafe for use. If something in the center crops up on the list, immediately remove the toy from your child care center and look for a new, safe replacement.

Adapted from the article on this website: http://www.greenerideal.com/lifestyle/0728-7-tips-for-choosing-greener-and-safer-toys/
Numbers and Characteristics of ECE Teachers

Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) PDF

What did the early childhood teaching and caregiving workforce look like in 2012? This research brief describes the Early Care and Education (ECE) workforce data developed in the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). The survey focuses on individuals providing direct care and education for children birth through five years and not yet in kindergarten. Findings are based on over 10,000 questionnaires completed in 2012 by a sample of individuals representing about one million center-based classroom staff, as well as about one million paid and about 2.7 million unpaid individuals regularly providing home-based ECE to children other than their own.

Daytime Naps Enhance Learning in Preschool

AMHERST, Mass. – Sleep researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst today offer the first research results showing classroom naps support learning in preschool children by enhancing memory. Children who napped performed significantly better on a visual-spatial task in the afternoon after a nap and the next day than those who did not nap.

Research psychologist Rebecca Spencer, with students Kasey Duclos and Laura Kurzdziel, say their results suggest naps are critical for memory consolidation and early learning, based on their study of more than 40 preschool children. “Essentially we are the first to report evidence that naps are important for preschool children,” Spencer says. “Our study shows that naps help the kids remember what they are learning in preschool.” Results appear in the current issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

For the full article, visit http://www.umass.edu/newsoffice/article/sleep-research-study-finds-daytime-naps.

Job Opportunities

Visit our website to find (or list) job openings in your area. Another way to stay connected within the Adventist system!

Southern California Conference
If you are Seventh-day Adventist, have a degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or the core classes (Child/Human Growth & Dev.& Child, Family & Community) & other EC Program/Curriculum (6SU/8QU) and are interested, please fax your resume ASAP to 818-547-4824. A+ Adventist Children’s Center, Malisa Smith, Director, 234 N. Isabel Street, Glendale, California 91206. 818-241-9353.

North Pacific Union
Cedarbrook Daycare and Preschool is now hiring a full-time Director to work in an Adventist Childcare Center. Must have a minimum of an A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education and knowledge of the Washington State Minimum Licensing Requirements. Job includes paid holidays, vacation, and sick days. Salary range $2000 to $2970, depending on experience and education. If interested, please call 360-379-2271 or email us at kidkarekrazy@hotmail.com

The Purposes of ACCN:

1. To affirm, encourage and empower all engaged in the weekday ministry to young children.
2. To encourage the continued professional growth of early childhood professionals and to provide opportunities for their professional and spiritual growth.
3. To provide networking opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist Child Development professionals.
4. To foster unity between all areas of child development within the Adventist Church.
5. To encourage the incorporation of Early Childhood Education in the nurture and outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
6. To foster working relationships with the world church, unions, conferences, local churches, and schools.
7. To encourage surveys and research in the area of Child Development and Early Childhood Education in cooperation with the North American Division.
8. To counsel with the North American Division and General Conference in the development and review of programs and strategies for Child Development.
9. To provide guidance and resources to training organizations, colleges, and universities.
10. To advocate the hiring of Early Childhood specialists at all organizational levels of the Adventist Church.
11. To develop working relationships with other Early Childhood Education organizations.
12. To encourage child care centers to obtain national accreditation.

In The States

The map on NACCRRRA.org includes information about child care licensing in each state. In addition, each state includes a link to the state page from Child Care Aware® of America’s reports reviewing child care center and family child care home policies in every state.

- To review the full report with regard to centers, see We Can Do Better: 2013 Update.
- To review the full report with regard to family child care homes, see Leaving Children to Chance

Each state also includes a link to Child Care Aware® of America’s one-page fact sheet with child care information related to the demographics in the state, the price of child care, and other data related to child care.
Limit High-tech Time

(EMAILWIRE.COM, July 20, 2013) San Francisco, CA -- The excess of use regarding touchscreen devices like tablets and smartphones may in fact hamper a child's development, lead to poorer eyesight and lead to addictive qualities, a new study is suggesting.

Professor Marjory Ebbeck stated that a child is better off playing with “low-tech” toys such as building blocks, rather than the new-age screen-based toys.

The basic tools help the children develop motor skills that can compromise a child as they become more adept with technology, according to the director of the Seed Institute Center of Research and Best Practices.

The institute itself, which is under the National Trades Union Congress, is in charge of running early childhood education diploma and degree courses of varying types.

The current study that is exposing such concerns regarding high-tech toys rests on data collected by Ebbeck and five fellow researchers. In total, 1,058 parents with children under the age of seven, and 1,542 children in total, were involved in the study.

The study noted that 66% of children two and under were acquainted with the gadgets, such as smartphones or tablets. 70% of parents indicated that the vision deterioration in the child as the top side effect.

Over half cited behavior that was consistent with addictive behavior, while they saw their children throwing tantrums or becoming endlessly restless without the device. Nearly 60% of parents believed, despite such concern, that the gadgets helped develop their child's motor skills.

According to Ebbeck, such items should be considered “adult devices, not children's toys.”

"Children develop most cognitively through imaginative play, like role-playing," she added, and they need freedom to "explore, experiment and discover", instead of being inhibited by gadgets because "everything is set, controlled for them".

The professor noted that children who utilize the gadgets should be closely supervised. That does not mean, however, the children should not be someone exposed to the high-tech items. Ebbeck is not unaware of the positive aspects of such uses, only pointing out the continued usage should be curbed.

Dr. Khoo Kim Choo, who runs a Preschool of Multiple Intelligences, agrees with Ebbeck.

"Children must interact with the real world in their early years," said Dr Khoo. "The world has lots more to offer to them. They need to learn about nature and what's around them."

Spare a Few Moments

Spare a few moments for the little ones in your life.

It leads to happier teenagers and less stress and strife.

Moments taken now will reap a big harvest indeed.

So make the time for those tiny precious ones in need.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.”

NAD Update on Affordable Health Care Act

Early Childhood centers are ministries of each local conference and as such, decisions regarding early childhood programs should be made at the local conference level. In October, there was a presentation made to the NAD Executive Committee reminding the group of the evangelism component of ECEC and urging that each local conference financially support this arm of ministry.

Affordable Care Act

In relation to the Health Care benefits (ACA), NAD Education Directors are recommending that ECEC personnel be provided equitable support as conference employees. The requirements of the Affordable Care Act apply to any employees of the conference (ECEC, janitors, secretaries, etc). Some conferences already have a mechanism for sharing the cost with the employee and the center.