

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

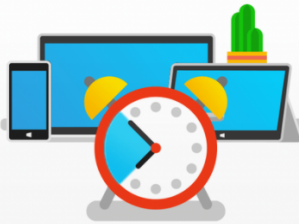
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AN RCS PREK FAMILY NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

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SCREEN TIME

Over the past 10 months, many of us have spent more time looking at a screen than we ever thought possible. As children transition back to the classroom, now is a good time to remind ourselves of appropriate screen time limits and how to help kids wean from the screen.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

The most recent guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend the following:



WHY LIMIT SCREEN TIME?

If children are happy and content using screens and caregivers receive a bit of a break, then what's the problem? The problem is that with **too much exposure** to screens, children are not getting enough time to play, learn, interact with others, or sleep. The decreased time spent on these important things can lead to impediments and negative risks to children's development and growth, both in the short- and long-term.

NOT ALL SCREEN TIME IS CREATED EQUAL

It is also important to remember that the **content** that children view while on a screen also has an impact on their development.

<1.5
years old



0
hr

Avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting

1.5-2
years old



0-1
hr

Introduce digital media, choose high-quality programming, and watch it with your children

2-5
years old



<1
hr

Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media w/ children

TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF SCREEN TIME

So how can you improve the quality of your child's screen time? Take a look at the tips below:

Choose media that are developmentally appropriate for your child. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) denotes the rating EC (Early Childhood), as having content suitable for ages 3+.



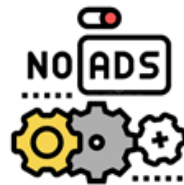
Always consider the types of screen time for your children. For example, instead of an hour of TV, opt for an educational app that is backed up by research.



Do your research and find out what apps, TV shows, movies, e-books, etc have high-quality programming and material.



When watching programming with your child, discuss what you're watching.



Try to eliminate advertisements, since young children have trouble telling the difference between ads and factual information.

Seek out interactive options that engage your child, rather than those that just require swiping or staring at the screen.

Use parental controls to block access to inappropriate material.



TIPS FOR MANAGING SCREEN TIME

If your family has gotten off-balance with screen time during the pandemic, don't worry! You're not alone, and there are ways to gently ease your children back into a healthier routine. Try out some of the tips below and see what works best for your family.

Make computers, tablets, TVs, etc stay in the shared spaces of your home.

When your kids use screens in the kitchen or living room, it's easier to keep an eye on what shows they are watching, what games they're playing, and how much time they are "on."

Add tech-free time to your family's schedule

Kids should know there are specific times when screens stay off, like at meals or before bed. Try to set aside time every week when the family does something fun together - no devices allowed.

Watch how often you use your own devices

Kids learn from the adults around them, and if you show restraint, it will make more sense when you ask the same from them. Plus, the more time spent on a device, the less time spent engaging with our children.

Make limits a regular part of screen use

When rules are clear and consistent, you can avoid daily battles when you tell the kids it's time to turn off the TV, tablet, or computer.

Make tech work for you

Use programs and apps that you can set to turn off computers, tablets, and smartphones after a given amount of time.

Reduce screen time gradually

Going cold turkey is hard, and it can be easier to start with some smaller changes. It could be no phones at the table, or all electronics to go off 2 hours before bed.

Store electronics out of sight

If devices are put away in cabinets or storage units, it'll help break the habit of automatically turning them on.