

Healthy Relationships with Technology & Screen Time

In today's technology-driven world, devices have become an essential part of our lives. They offer convenience, connection, and even learning opportunities. We rely heavily on screens for work and school, entertainment, and communication. Too much screen time can impact our sleep, mental and physical health, and even our ability to truly connect with one another. Finding a healthy balance helps us develop strong habits, creativity, and emotional well-being.

Mental health impacts of too much screen time can include depression, low self-esteem, decreased physical activity, attention span problems, behavioral issues, and insomnia. It's important to be mindful of the role screens play in our homes. Our tendency to "doom scroll" through social media and binge watch television can create an unhealthy cycle of dependency on our devices.

But what exactly is "too much" screen time? According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and World Health Organization, the answer varies by age and what kind of screen time it is.

0 – 18 Months: NONE

No screen time, unless used for video chatting.

18 – 24 Months: MINIMAL

Limit screen time to watching educational programming with a caregiver.

2 – 5 Years: ONE HOUR

Limit screen time to high-quality programs for less than one (1) hour per day.

6 – 10 Years: 1.5 HOURS

Limit screen time to less than 90 minutes (1.5 hours) per day.

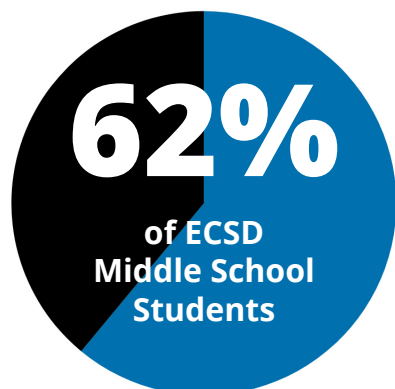
11 – 13 Years: TWO HOURS

Limit screen time to less than two (2) hours per day.

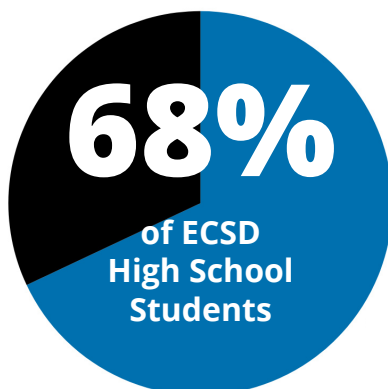
14+ Years

At this age, the recommendations around screen time shift from strict time limits to a focus on healthy habits, balance, and the quality of online engagement. Children (and adults) should foster a healthy relationship with technology that doesn't displace sleep, physical activity, social connections with family and friends, and other essential aspects of well-being.

Balancing screen time with other activities is crucial for health and development.



Report spending 3+ hours on an electronic device for something other than schoolwork each day.



Healthy Kids Colorado Survey 2023 Data



Create a Family Media Plan

Technology should work for your parenting style, and when used thoughtfully and appropriately it can be a very good thing.

A personalized "Family Media Plan" supports you in discussing healthy media habits that work for your family's specific needs and values. Set rules together so that everyone feels heard. Media plans have been successful for families with children as young as 6!

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<https://tinyurl.com/Create-a-Family-Media-Plan>

TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- **Lead by example.**
Disconnect from your own devices and prioritize face-to-face interactions.

Stop using screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime to promote good sleep.
- **Be present at meal times.**
Put down your devices and turn off any distractions to encourage authentic conversations.
- **Use parental controls.**
Learn about the applications and websites your child is accessing, and implement parental controls to protect them from inappropriate content.