

Title I Calendar

Connecting Home and School

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Limit Screen Time for Healthier Kids

A lot of kids spend more time in front of a screen than they do reading, talking with family and friends, or playing outside. It's also affecting their health.

Too much screen time is associated with:

- violent behavior
- poor school performance
- lower reading scores
- bad habits later in life (like tobacco and alcohol abuse)
- consumption of junk food
- being overweight
- sleep pattern disturbances

Although some screen time can be educational and even encourage physical activity, it's all too easy to just sit and watch for hours. Health experts recommend these screen time limits:

TEENS: less than 2 hours a day

AGES 3–12: less than 1 hour a day for children

Under 2: no screen time for children under 2. Help your kids find other things to do.

Tips for reducing screen time

- Turn off the TV during meals, which encourages everyone to eat and talk together.
- Keep computers, TVs, and video game consoles out of kids' bedrooms, and keep cell phones and iPods out of the bedroom at night.
- Don't use screen time as a reward.
- Designate certain days of the week as screen-free days.

Watch and talk together

When your children do watch TV, make sure you talk to them and ask them questions. After the program is over, turn the TV off and help your children think about and understand what they watched. This is a great way to start conversations about what is important to you and your family. Some questions to ask might be:

- Can you tell me the story of what happened during the show?
- What was your favorite part?
- Who was your favorite character?
- What did you like, and why?
- What didn't you like, and why?
- Is this one of your favorite shows?
- What would you tell your friend about this show?

Share your own thoughts with your children and ask them what they think too!

What you can do instead

- Exercise as a family by taking walks, riding bikes, or playing sports or active games together.
- Do something active for at least 60 minutes each day.
- Set up screen-free play dates.
- Encourage your kids to write a story, draw, or create an art project.

Adapted from Kaiser Permanente

The Cambridge Public Schools encourages families to become aware of what their child is learning and to support and monitor their child's education. May 2016.