

Cherry Hill Public Schools

Screen Time Guidelines



Aligns and Supports Policy 2360

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Active vs. Passive Screen Time: Understanding the Difference

Not all screen time is created equal. Research emphasizes that the *type* of engagement is often more important than the total minutes spent on a device.

Active Screen Time (Engagement & Creation)

Active screen time involves cognitive or physical participation. The user is a creator or a critical thinker rather than a spectator.

- **Content Creation:** Coding, digital art, video editing, and music production.
- **Interactive Learning:** Educational games, simulations, and problem-solving apps.
- **Collaboration:** Video conferencing for peer projects or interacting with experts.
- **Physical Activity:** Movement-based games or fitness apps that require physical input.

Passive Screen Time (Consumption)

Passive screen time involves receiving information without a requirement for response or critical thought.

- **Consumption:** Watching TV shows, movies, or YouTube videos without interaction.
 - **Mindless Scrolling:** Browsing social media feeds or "autoplay" content.
 - **Repetitive Tasks:** Digital worksheets that require simple clicking without reflection.
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Research on the Benefits of Active Screen Time

According to research highlighted by *EdTech Magazine* and various health organizations, active and educational screen use offers distinct advantages over passive consumption:

1. **Academic Persistence:** Educational screen time has been shown to have positive effects on a child's persistence in learning tasks and overall educational outcomes.
2. **Cognitive Performance:** Interactive learning, such as puzzle-solving and strategy-based educational games, can enhance cognitive development and academic performance.
3. **Attentional Outcomes:** Unlike passive viewing, which can be detrimental to attention spans, interactive and educational screen use tends to show more favorable attentional outcomes.
4. **Skill Development:** Active use fosters digital literacy and technical competencies essential for 21st-century careers.
5. **Health Neutrality:** While excessive passive screen time is linked to health concerns, educational and active screen use generally shows no significant negative impact on physical health when balanced with other activities.

Recommended Daily Screen Time Limits

Recreation Screen Time

The following chart outlines acceptable recreational screen time limits. Note that **educational screen time** (schoolwork and active learning) is typically viewed as separate from these recreational limits.

Grade Level	Age Range	Recommended Daily Recreational Limit	Focus & Guidance
PK - K	3–5 Years	Up to 1 hour	High-quality, co-viewed educational content.
1 - 2	6–7 Years	1 - 1.5 hours	Prioritize interactive learning over entertainment.
3 - 5	8–10 Years	1.5 hours	Balance digital use with physical activity and sleep.
6 - 8	11–14 Years	Up to 2 hours	Focus on digital citizenship and quality of content.
9 - 12	15–18 Years	2 hours or less	Encourage self-regulation and purposeful use.

Recommended Daily Educational Screen Time* Limits(from CHPS)

Educational Screen Time**

The following chart considers the recommendations for CHPS acceptable educational screen time.

Grade Level	Age Range	Recommended Daily Educational Limit
PreK	3–5 Years	15 minutes per day during choice time - 1.5 hours per week
K - 2	5–7 Years	30 minutes average per day across content areas *ST Math 10 minutes average *Boost Reading 10 minutes average *Computer Science Standards coding 10 minutes 1x per week average *approximately 10 minutes average other educational programs such as IXL, Iready, Book creator, IE activities

Grade Level	Age Range	Recommended Daily Educational Limit
3	8-9	45 minutes average per day across content areas *ST Math 15 minutes average *Boost Reading 15 minutes average *Computer Science Standards coding 10 minutes 1x per week average *approximately 10 minutes average other educational programs such as IXL, Iready, Book creator, IE activities
4 - 5	9–10 Years	60 minutes average per day across content areas *ST Math 15 minutes average *Boost Reading 15 minutes average *Amplify long form writing 10 minutes *Computer Science Standards coding 10 minutes 1x per week *approximately 15 minutes average other educational programs such as IXL, i-Ready, Book creator, IE lessons
6 - 8	11–14 Years	No more than 1 hour per class during the week (no more than 5 hours per week) No more that 1 hour per day at home for homework
9 - 12	15–18 Years	No more than 1 hour per class during the week (no more than 8 hours per week) No more that 2 hour per day at home for homework

*times will vary during benchmark and state assessment windows grades 3-high school

** these are recommended screentimes and will not be included in the screentime allocations for computer based courses such as, but not limited to computer science

Best Practices for Schools and Homes

- **Prioritize Quality:** Choose apps and platforms that require students to make choices, solve problems, or create something new.
- **Co-View and Discuss:** For younger students, engagement is most effective when an adult watches or plays alongside them to ask questions.
- **The "Goldilocks" Rule:** Screen time should not replace sleep, physical activity, or face-to-face social interaction.
- **Model Behavior:** Adults should demonstrate healthy digital habits by setting aside

"screen-free" times during meals or transition periods.

Distribution of Devices

Grade Level	Age Range	Recommended Distribution
PreK	3–5 Years	No devices issued
K - 12	5–18 Years	Access to devices while in school for instructional purposes for active engagement and maybe issued if needed at home

References

EdTech Magazine. (2023). *Here's What Research Says About Screen Time and School-Aged Kids*. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). (2016). *Media and Young Minds*. American Heart Association (AHA). (2018). *Screen Time and Kids*.

<https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2023/01/heres-what-research-says-about-screen-time-and-school-aged-kids>