

Screen time and your child

(and that includes TV time!)

Screen time and screen use: part of a healthy lifestyle

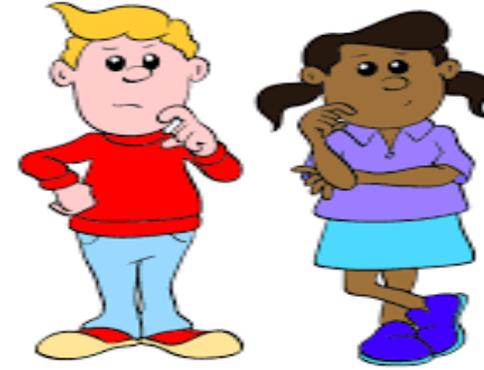
Screen time and screen use are normal parts of life.

It's all about making sure children enjoy plenty of healthy, fun activities, both with and without screens. This includes [physical activity](#), [reading](#), [creative play](#) and [social time with family](#).

**When children do use screens, monitor what they watch or use!
Remember parental control settings are there for good reason.**



How Much Is Too Much?



Screen time sessions should be short.

- Getting up and moving around is important for your child's energy levels, development, sleep, and general wellbeing. It's a good idea to encourage your child to take a break at least every 30 minutes

Encourage your child to:

- use a timer to set breaks
- do something active when the timer ends
- make use of natural breaks in screen time – for example, encourage your child to do a victory dance when they finish a lesson... anything that will get your child moving, especially outside.

Don't be scared about making rules for screen time

- Find the balance between screen use and other activities by working with your child on some [family rules](#)...
- **where** your child can use screens – for example, only in family rooms not in the car or whilst eating



- **when** your child **can** use screens –i.e. mealtimes are free of TV, computers and phones, or no screen time before school
- **how** your child can use screens –i.e. great for seeking formal information or for school work, not so great on finding out who would win a fight between King Kong or Godzilla
- **how** you handle screen time for children of different ages – for example, there might be some games that your older child can play only when their younger sibling is out or has gone to bed.



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We all have our daily routines and family/house rules, but it seems at this current time many rules and routines may have changed or disappeared altogether!

Why not make new routines/rules that can adapt to life as it is now?

They need to be:

Realistic Achievable Manageable Jointly owned

Have a family meeting and involve the children in the planning. Listen to what they have to offer and compromise, but remember to make time for family fun and games!

Working together will help you all enjoy family time and a feeling of connection.

Remember, children thrive on structure and routine.



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Avoid screen time before bed

Using screens before bed can affect how quickly your child falls asleep. If your child avoids mobile phones, tablets, computer screens or TV in the hour before bed, your child is likely to get to sleep more quickly.

Keep screens out of bedrooms at night

If you keep mobile phones and other devices out of your child's bedroom at night, your child won't be able to stay up late playing games or messaging friends. This can also stop your child being disturbed in the night by messages or notifications.



Melatonin is a natural hormone made by a pea-sized gland located just above the middle of the brain. Melatonin signals that it's time to sleep.

During the day the gland is inactive. When the sun goes down and darkness occurs, the gland is "turned on" and begins to actively produce melatonin, which is released into the blood. This usually occurs around 9 pm and as a result; melatonin levels in the blood rise sharply and you begin to feel less alert and more sleepy.

Melatonin levels in the blood stay high for about 12 hours (all through the night) - before they fall back to low daytime levels by about 9 am. Daytime levels of melatonin are barely detectable.

Ipad's, TV's, mobile phones, lap tops etc emit light of all colours, but it's the blue light in particular that poses a danger to sleep. Blue light prevents the release of melatonin, causing sleep difficulties.

You don't have to be staring directly at a television or computer screen: If enough blue light hits the eye, the gland can stop releasing melatonin.

Solution: Keep all electrical equipment out of the bedroom