



Why is Limiting Screen Time Important in My Child Care Facility?

For children under two, spending time in front of a TV or computer can get in the way of exploring their surroundings, playing and interacting with peers, all of which are important for healthy minds and bodies.

As children get older, too much screen time can get in the way of reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family, and can also increase their risk for being overweight or obese.

There are a number of ways that screen time can be unhealthy:

- 1 children are spending more time sitting and very little time moving their bodies
- 2 children learn unhealthy eating practices from advertisements
- 3 sitting in front of the TV can increase the desire to snack
- 4 overstimulation can prevent children from getting the sleep they need at nap time



CHILDREN need to move in order to explore their surroundings!

How much screen time is too much?

Health and safety experts in child care recommend that providers limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes per week.

Limiting media time for kids two and older during their time in child care will help meet the AAP recommendation: reduce screen time to no more than 2 hours per day, including time at home.





Getting Started

YOUR COMMITMENT to limiting screen time is one more way to show parents how dedicated you are to the health and well-being of their children. Involve staff and families in the process of developing a plan for limiting screen time in your facility for greater success.

How do I get started?

Make the commitment. The first step in making a commitment is to understand the importance of screen time reduction, and why it's crucial to help young children (and ourselves) reduce time with screens.

- **Keep track.** Encourage youth to use the Screen-Free Activity Log included in this toolkit to allow them to be aware of what they are watching and why.
- **Be creative!** Younger children can plan for things they would like to do in place of screen time and draw it on the “Picture It on Television” handout. Older youth may want to use the Screen Time Tracker to see how much time they spend each week in front of a screen. Check out the 50 Screen-Free Activities for ideas, too!
- **Pay special attention** to times when you most depend on screen time and make a plan to be active during that time.
- **Talk about the benefits of limiting screen time** and set your own screen-free times.
- **Remember, it takes a long time to change habits.** Whatever works to reduce screen time is a positive step.



WHAT IS SCREEN TIME? “Screen time” is any time spent in front of a screen, such as a TV, computer, video game player, or tablet. Screen time is a sedentary activity. Very little energy is used during screen time.



SEE PAGE 8 FOR TIPS TO REDUCE SCREEN TIME!



TOOLS FOR
PROMOTING
HEALTHY GROWTH

Facts About Kids and Screens

Screen time is any time spent watching television and videos, playing video, computer or tablet games, and surfing the Internet. With more electronic entertainment options than ever before, it is harder to get children up and moving. Children today are spending more time with screens than in any activity but sleeping.

- Each hour of TV viewing by school-age kids is associated with 167 additional calories.
- Just one hour of TV viewing daily is associated with higher consumption of fast food, sweets, chips, and pizza.
- Two or more hours of TV viewing daily is associated with significant likelihood of overweight among 3-year-olds.
- Children with a TV in their bedrooms snack more than those without.

Screen Time and Academics

- Middle school children who watched more television, movies and video games did worse in school than those who watched less.
- Third graders with a bedroom TV scored seven to nine points lower on standardized tests than those without a bedroom TV.

Screen Time and Sleep

- Television viewing among infants and children is associated with irregular sleep schedules.
- Teens watching more than three hours of TV per day are more likely to have sleep problems in early adulthood.



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS recommends no screen time for children under 2 and less than 2 hours per day for older children.

