



Screen time fact sheet

Best practices for parents and carers

Think about quality over quantity

Research has found that there is no perfect amount of screen time. The right amount of screen time will be different for everyone, and will depend on your family's lifestyle. Instead, it is useful to think about screen time in terms of quality over quantity. Children might be enjoying a wide range of activities on their devices, like homework, online games, or socialising with friends. These positive uses of technology can really support young people's wellbeing. However, screen time should not replace sleeping, eating, exercise, or get in the way of hobbies that children already enjoy, and it's important for parents and carers to put practices in place to prevent this from happening, whether that's utilising screen time apps or updating screen time settings, found within platforms.

Talk about warning signs

There are lots of ways to tell if you have been looking at a screen for too long. It could be sore eyes, a headache, feeling sleepy or restless, or needing to stretch. These signs will be different for everyone, and it is good to talk to your children about these signs, to help them to recognise their own warning signs. Allowing them to recognize these signs can help your children to start managing their screen time habits, themselves

Create, review and adapt expectations

Create expectations around screen time and use of technology together. Discuss how long you each think you should be spending on your devices, what limits you can put in place, and how you can help each other stick to those limits. You could use a Family Agreement to talk about and set expectations. Once you have decided on what expectations and limits work for your family, set a date to review and adapt them as your children get older.

Explore and use wellbeing settings

Lots of apps and devices now have wellbeing settings to support children and young people with having a healthy balance of time online and offline. This could be screen time limits, the need for passcodes, 'family pairing' features 'do not disturb' functions, or disabling autoplay on apps like YouTube and Netflix.

Screen Time recommendations

Modern guidance has moved away from strict time limits but there is an emphasis on making sure screens do not replace, sleep, play relationships and that there is parental involvement and conversation.

Under 2

Avoid screen time completely at this age, it cannot replace important learning, and face to face interaction.

Age 2 – 5



Up to one hour per day. Guidance also recommends to avoid screen at mealtimes, avoid screens one hour before bed, and watch together and talk about what is on screen. Less is better

Age 5 – 11

There is no clear time guidance but a recommendation to focus on balance.

Ensure screens do not replace sleep, physical activity and family time

Age 11 – 16

Again, there is no fixed daily limit but there are key expectations around maintaining healthy routines, avoiding late night use and to monitor content and online safety. The focus shifts to self management, digital skills and safe use.