

Screen Time Advice for Young Children

Canadian Pediatric Society advice:

- less than 2 years old, not recommended
- 2 – 5 years old, less than one hour per day, for all screens

Risks of screen time:

- Decreased physical well-being
- Weight gain and obesity
- Delays in social and language development
- Exposure to advertising and inappropriate media/images

Benefits:

- Quality programming can support language development and learning concepts
- Active video games can support physical activity, e.g. dance, yoga and other exercise

Advice:

Do not watch screens 1 hour before bed as this can interfere with Melatonin production and sleep onset.

Do not excessively use screens when you are with your child. This is called technoferece. This can interfere with your child's development and undermine your relationship with your child.

Do model appropriate use of technology. Put your devices away for meals, play and family time.

Do structure and limit screen time. If children are stressed when you take the device away or seem "stuck" or obsessed with screen time they may be more vulnerable to the effects or content of screen time. Some children get more anxious or depressed the more time they spend with screen time. Some children's sleep is disturbed and they may have trouble falling asleep or may have nightmares.

Censor the media your child watches. Advertising is designed to influence your child's choices. Some commercial children's programming may have content that is not healthy or may not match your family's values. Young children are sensitive to images they observe and do not have the thinking skills to understand inappropriate material they may see on screens.

<https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2531-screen-use-tips-for-parents-of-children-under-three>