Why Should We Limit Screen Time?

DID YOU KNOW

Too much screen time can have harmful effects on children.

• During the first two years of life, a child’s brain and body experience important growth and development, and exposure to screen time detracts from important social interactions with caregivers.
• With continued exposure, including the preschool years, excess screen time is associated with language delays, obesity, attention problems and even aggression, especially if the content is violent.

Screen time includes watching shows and playing games.

• Screen time includes TV, videos, DVDs, computers, tablets, video games and handheld devices (e.g., smartphones).
• For children under 2 years of age, screen time includes any time spent watching shows or playing games (including active video games) on a screen.
• For children 2 years of age and older, screen time does not include teachers using e-books or tablet computers to read children stories, using Smart Boards for interactive instruction, or connecting with families through Skype or other videoconferencing programs.

Early childhood programs play an important role in limiting screen time.

• Most children watch television before and after attending child care. Limiting or eliminating screen time in the child care setting can help families come closer to meeting the recommended goal of less than two hours of screen time daily.
• Reducing screen time gives more opportunities for physical activity and more time spent with books, classroom exploration and interactions with others.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILDREN LIMIT SCREEN TIME

• Turn off the TV. Carefully plan if and when you will watch shows.
• Remove the TV from the areas where children spend time, or keep it out of sight by covering it with a cloth.

PARENTS AS TEACHER – MODEL HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

• Young children naturally want to do what you do. You can help your children develop healthy screen time habits, and being a good role model is where it begins.
• Do not use hand held devices while engaging with children.
• Turn the television off during meal times.
• Focus family time on physical activity instead of television shows.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCREEN TIME?

• No screen time (TV/video/DVD) for children under the age of 2.
• No more than 1 to 2 hours per day of high-quality programming for children over the age of 2. This should be limited to no more than 30 minutes once per week in early childhood programs.