

SCREENTIME

What is the recommended screen time for Australian kids?

Recommended screen time in Australia is based on the The Australian National Physical activity and sedentary guidelines:

- Under 2 years old ZERO screen time (including watching television, electonic media, DVD"s, computers and electonic games).
- 2-5 years Less than 1 hour p/day.
- 5-17 years Less than two hours p/day.

Let's face it, increased screen time is something we all face and while Australian guidelines for screen time for kids was based on passive watching, the actual screen time useage is increasing rapidly as the online world becomes part of socialising, education and general living. The figures above also do not take into account screentime for educational use and with more and more schools taking learning online this screen time will only be increasing.



Take a look at the recent snapshot from the Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner on screen use: Research insights and infographic on what kids are doing online

What are some good guidelines to follow?

Striking a balanace, having a set of expectations and even a family plan for screen use are positive ways to start to navigate screen time use for kids. Screen time and useage will be different from family to family and again different for the ages of your children.

For younger kids:

- Install parental controls so what they are accessing is appropriate
- Only use age-appropriate sites with high learning potential and not games.
- Bookmark favourite sites you have introduced your child too so they only go to the sites they are interested in
- Sit with kids so you can explain how you are navigating and what they seeing.
- Always have the device in an area where you are so you are able to see what they are doing
- Put a time limit on your sessions, instilling the idea of developing a balance to tech use early
- Avoid just-before-bed computer time as it can be stimulating and interrupt sleep.

For teens:

Most important – Kids model their behaviour of tech from what they see and the boundaries around screen time that is the family norm. Setting up good family guidelines around tech use early very much helps in later years.

How much is too much?

It's sometimes hard to know whether your child's increased online time and changes in behaviour are just developmental or whether there is a problem. Usually if you are observing that online time is interfering with other aspects of your or your child's life, then its time for a discussion about expectations and time limits. Some behaviour changes to look out for:

- · general health and wellbeing neglected or reduced personal hygiene
- isolated or withdrawn for long periods of time
- appearing anxious or irritable when away from the computer
- · ongoing headaches, eye strain, sleep disturbance, excessive tiredness
- obsession with particular websites or games
- anger when being asked to take a break from online activity, negative changes in behaviour and declined interest in social activities like meeting friends or playing sport
- a decline in academic performance and failing to complete schoolwork



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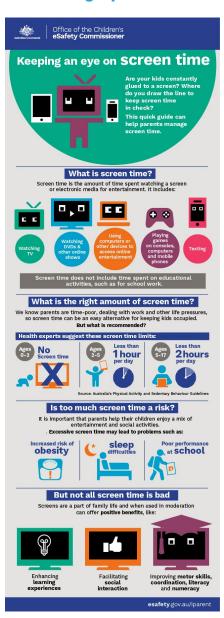
Some parent tips for screentime



How much is too much time?

Source: Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner

Some infographics from the Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner:







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