

# Screen Time



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

Santé mentale  
en milieu scolaire  
Ontario



Well-being  
St. Clair Catholic District School Board



## Facts

- Screen time for children under 2 years old is not recommended.
- There is no evidence to support introducing technology at an early age.
- Young children will nearly always choose talking, playing or being read to over screens.
- Children under 5 years old learn best by interacting with family members and caregivers.
- Too much screen time can lead to lost opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Playing video games is a popular activity for kids. Kids who play video games too much may feel depressed, irritable, or anxious, and have trouble getting along with family and other kids. Video gaming can get in the way of:
  - Making friends and maintaining good friendships
  - Participating in family activities
  - Keeping up with schoolwork
  - Keeping a job (*for older kids*)
  - Getting enough sleep
  - Taking baths and maintaining good hygiene
  - Eating regular meals

## Tips

- For children 2 to 5 years, limit routine or regular screen time to less than 1 hour per day.
- Avoid screens at least 1 hour before bed.
- Prioritize educational, age-appropriate and interactive programming.
- Be present and engaged when screens are used and, whenever possible, co-view with children.
- Be mindful of all screen use in the home, and model positive habits
- Turn off screens when they're not being used, or when they are just "background" noise.
- Be aware of how adults' use of screens can influence children.
- Remember, children do not need exposure to digital media to learn
- Set limits depending on your child/teen's age, and more time can be allowed on weekends and holidays. The goal is to find a good balance that works.
- Talk to your child/teen about the reasons they enjoy video games. It could be for fun or online friendships, or out of boredom, but it could also be a way to avoid dealing with other problems.
- Create a list with your child/teen of activities they can do instead of screen time/video gaming when feeling stressed, upset, or bored.

## Resources

- <http://mediasmarts.ca/>
- <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/screen-time-and-digital-media>
- <https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children>
- [https://www.cps.ca/uploads/about/CPS\\_ScreenTime-EN.pdf](https://www.cps.ca/uploads/about/CPS_ScreenTime-EN.pdf)
- <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>

## Sources

- Canadian Pediatric Society
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Child and Parent Resource Institute (Ontario)