

KIDS AND SCREENS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under 2 and less than 2 hours per day for older children.

Excessive screen time puts young children at risk

- Forty percent of 3-month-old infants are regular viewers of screen media², and 19% of babies 1 year and under have a TV in their bedroom.³
- Screen time can be habit-forming: the more time children engage with screens, the harder time they have turning them off as older children.⁴
- Screen time for children under 3 is linked to irregular sleep patterns⁵ and delayed language acquisition.⁶
- The more time preschool children and babies spend with screens, the less time they spend interacting with their parents.⁷ Even when parents co-view, they spend less time talking to their children than when they're engaged in other activities.⁸
- Toddler screen time is also associated with problems in later childhood, including lower math and school achievement, reduced physical activity, victimization by classmates,⁹ and increased BMI.¹⁰

SCREEN-FREE FACT

On average, preschool children spend 32 hours a week with screen media.¹

- Direct exposure to TV and overall household viewing are associated with increased early childhood aggression.¹¹
- The more time preschool children spend with screens, the less time they spend engaged in creative play⁷ – the foundation of learning,¹² constructive problem solving,¹³ and creativity.¹⁴
- On average, preschool children see nearly 25,000 television commercials, a figure that does not include product placement.¹⁵

School-age children are also at risk from excessive screen time

- Including multitasking, children ages 8-18 spend an average of 4 ½ hours per day watching television, 1 ½ hours using computers, and more than an hour playing video games.¹⁶
- Black and Hispanic youth spend even more time with screen media than their white peers.¹⁶
- Time spent with screens is associated with:
 - childhood obesity¹⁷
 - sleep disturbances¹⁸
 - attention span issues¹⁹
- Children with 2 or more hours of daily screen time are more likely to have increased psychological difficulties, including hyperactivity, emotional and conduct problems, as well as difficulties with peers.²⁰

SCREEN-FREE FACT

In a survey of youth ages 8-18, nearly 1 in 4 said they felt “addicted” to video games.²⁵

- Adolescents who watch 3 or more hours of television daily are at especially high risk for poor homework completion, negative attitudes toward school, poor grades, and long-term academic failure.²¹
- Adolescents with a television in their bedroom spend more time watching TV and report less physical activity, less healthy dietary habits, worse school performance, and fewer family meals.²²
- Children with a television in their bedroom are more likely to be overweight.²³

- Especially high rates of bedroom televisions (70-74%) have been seen among racial/ethnic minority children aged 2 to 13 years.²⁴

Research shows the benefits of reduced screen time.

- Reducing screen time can help prevent childhood obesity.²⁶
- Children who spend less time watching television in early years tend to do better in school, have a healthier diet, be more physically active, and are better able to engage in schoolwork in later elementary school.⁹
- Television viewing at a young age is associated with later behavioral problems, but not if heavy viewing is discontinued before age six.²⁷
- Limiting exposure to television during the first 4 years of life may decrease children’s interest in it in later years.⁴

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents create an electronic-media-free environment in children’s bedrooms.

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