

5 Reasons Children Need to Have Limits on Screen Time

1. HEALTHY BODIES

Engaging in sedentary screen time activities for more than 1.5 hours daily is a risk factor for obesity in children ages 4 - 9. Lengthy screen time can also lead to speech delays. For each 30-minute increase in handheld screen time, researchers found a 49% increased risk of expressive speech delay.

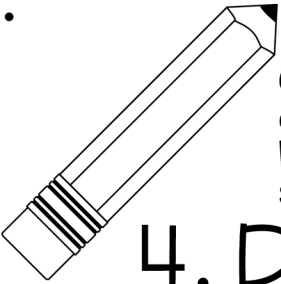


2. WIRED AND TIRED

Screens can overstimulate a child and lead to sensory overload, difficulty settling down to sleep, lack of restorative sleep, and a hyperaroused nervous system. As a result, kids are often in a state of being "wired and tired" (that is, they're agitated, irrational, and exhausted).

3. FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Coloring, cutting and the pincer grasp. Human hands are made for creating, engaging and connecting! These early skills are important for complete health. Electronic use interferes with the development of these fine motor skills.



4. DOPAMINE

Electronics hook kids because of the "feel good" neurochemical, dopamine. Viewing new and exciting things, gaming achievements, and receiving "likes" all cause dopamine to be released by the brain. Once the dopamine-reward pathway is activated, it tells the individual to repeat what he or she just did in order to get that feel-good dopamine reward again. This results in over-used pathways and classic addictive behaviors. Children's developing brains are especially vulnerable.



5. ATTENTION AND FOCUS

Frequent exposure to screens compromises a child's ability to maintain focus on tasks such as schoolwork. Dopamine is critical for focus and motivation. Once damaged, over-used pathways cannot hold focus. This can lead to attention deficit and depressive thoughts.



5 Things You Can Do Today:

1. Make a personalized family media plan, such as the one found here:
<http://www.healthyscreenhabits.org/tools#FamilyTechnologyPlan>
2. Designate "screen free" zones in your house.
(Bedrooms and bathrooms, specifically)
3. Designate "screen free" times in your family.
(Dinner, after bathtime, before school)
4. Limit gaming and electronics. Instead, encourage children to engage in outdoor and creative play and intentionally connect with your child each day.
5. Remove "Autoplay" feature from You Tube.
(Check your settings - it's easy!)

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS GUIDELINES

0-2 year-olds: Avoid screen use other than video chatting with family members.

2 to 5 year-olds: Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs.

6 years and older: Set limits on the time spent using screens, and the types of media they are using.

Important!

Limit your family devices to "public" spaces in your home. Avoid closed doors.

FURTHER RESOURCES

healthyscreenhabits.org

healthychildren.org

first5California.com

ahaparenting.com

drkardaras.com

