

Screen Time

What is screen time?

Time spent in front of a computer, smartphone, tablet, television or gaming device.

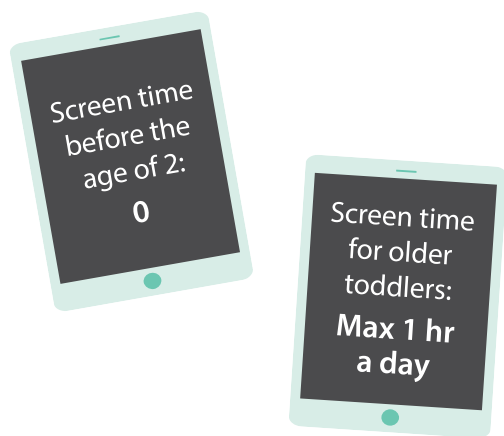


DID YOU KNOW?

When toddlers spend excessive time in front of screens, they may show increased behavioural challenges, have difficulty sleeping, exhibit readiness issues for school, and be more likely to experience unhealthy weight gain.

Less is Better

The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends no screen time for children under the age of 2, and a maximum of 1 hour a day for older toddlers. Overall, the less screen time, the better.



Why?

- Screen time cuts into quality time for you and your toddler.
- It takes time away from active play and social time that can help your child develop and bond with others.
- Screens over-stimulate your toddler with too much colour, movement and sound.
- Although some types of content are better than others, most screen time teaches your toddler little or nothing. (See [Safer Screens](#))
- Screens display ads showing unhealthy foods, violence and stereotypes.



BRAIN BUILDER

Be aware of your own screen use. Are you looking at your phone rather than focusing fully on your child? Remember: when you pay attention to and interact with your toddler, you're helping them build a healthy brain and body. Try turning off your phone notifications – or simply putting your phone away – when you're spending time with them.



TRY THIS

Instead of giving your toddler your phone or tablet, engage them with board books, simple puzzles, or toys focused on sorting shapes and stacking.

Safer Screens

You may not be able to eliminate screens completely. After all, sometimes handing over your phone or turning on the TV may seem like the only way to get a few minutes to start dinner or gather your thoughts. But you can make screen time as healthy as possible by:

- ✓ thinking about when and why screens are in use, and not using them out of habit, for entertainment or for background noise
- ✓ choosing TV shows for children that have familiar characters, use songs and repetition to teach and encourage participation
- ✓ being nearby whenever your child uses screens or – better yet – watching together and talking about what you're seeing
- ✓ making screen time positive time. A video call with out-of-town relatives, for example, can actually benefit your child.



TRY THIS

Make a family screen time plan that you all agree to. Include:

- daily time limits for kids and parents and caregivers
- no screens during mealtimes
- no screens in kids' bedrooms
- no TV on as background noise

Ensure your child care providers know the rules, too.