

How screens and digital media affect our children



Contents of today

- Facts about screen-time
- How much screen-time is ok for our children
- Sensible use of screen-time



Benefits of digital media



Status quo: babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers

In 1970, children began to regularly watch TV at 4 years of age, whereas today, children begin interacting with digital media at 4 months of age.



Status quo: Adolescents

99.9% of 15-year-olds in the UK use digital technology on a daily basis.

It is common to engage in more than 1 form of media at the same time, a practice referred to as media multitasking.



We can't turn the clocks back ...

- Digital media are part of our lives
- How to best handle it?



Benefits of digital media for children/ adolescents depend on

- a child's age and developmental stage
- how the media are used (with/ without a parent)
- the media content and design



Birth until 2 years of age

- Children at this age do not need exposure to the tool that is technology.
- What they need the most for healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development is interaction with human beings and with the physical world around them.



Babies

- Real-life interactions with parents are much more effective than video for learning of new verbal or nonverbal problem-solving skills



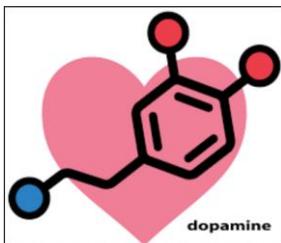
Babies and toddlers

- Video-chat episodes usually are brief, promote social connection, and involve support from adults and should not be discouraged in infants and toddlers



What are we teaching babies and toddlers by using screens?

- <http://www.suzannezeedyk.com>





**DIGGER
SENSORY
TRAY**
safe for toddlers



Ideas for babies and toddlers

11 Fun Activities for 1-Year-Olds

- <http://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/activities/indoor/one-year-old-activities/>

21 activities for one year olds

- <http://wildflowerramblings.com/baby-play/activities-for-one-year-olds/>

Ages 2-5 (Preschool)

- 1 hour a day guideline set by the AAP
- The best learning for developing preschoolers happens when they engage with the real world



Ideas for pre-schoolers



<https://icebreakerideas.com/hand-clapping-games/>





School-aged children: not more than 2 hours screen-time per day

• **Research study concludes:**

Children with 2 or more hours of daily screen time are more likely to have increased psychological difficulties, including hyperactivity, emotional and conduct problems, and difficulties with peers.

Page, A. S., Cooper, A. R., Griew, P., & Jago, R. (2010). Children's screen viewing is related to psychological difficulties irrespective of physical activity. *Pediatrics*, 126(5), 1011-1017.

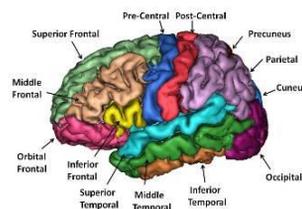
ASD and screens

Children with ASD are uniquely vulnerable to various brain-related impacts of screen time



ASD and screens

Screen time hinders connectivity of different areas in the brain



ASD and screens

- Screen time hinders development of social communication
- Screen time appears to directly compete with social rewards, including eye contact



ASD and screens

Children with autism tend to have **low melatonin and sleep disturbances anyways** and screen time suppresses melatonin and disrupts sleep further



School-aged children and adolescents ... more research ...



Obesity

High levels of media use are linked to obesity and cardiovascular risk



Sleep disturbance

Increased duration of media exposure and the presence of a screen in the bedroom results in fewer minutes of sleep per night



Academic results and screen-time

Teenagers who spend an extra hour a day surfing the internet, watching TV or playing computer games risk performing two grades worse in exams than their peers who don't



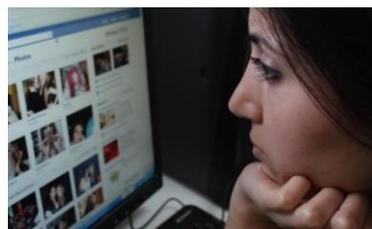
Risky behaviours

Parents underestimate the likelihood that their child might engage in online conversation with people they do not know



Digital media and mental health

Increased social media use and depression are connected



Recommendations, Strategies, Tips and Tricks



Self-awareness

Think about your own use of screens, digital and social media



What to do if your child has too much screen-time

- Start reducing screen time by 10-15 minutes a day at the most
- Give them warnings 10 minutes before their time is up



Display time-allowance visually



Screen Time Contract

I, _____, will abide by the following expectations regarding screen time:

Every day, I will have this much total screen time: _____
(Screen time includes television, computer, video games, and hand-held video game/play)

If necessary, you can get even more specific and define how much screen time will be used for each type of activity:

Television: _____ Video Games: _____
Hand-held video game/play: _____

Computer: _____

Screen time will never get in the way of my homework time

When my screen time is over, I will stop my video, show, or game without an argument.

Screen time will never get in the way of household chores and obligations

I understand that some days I may not get all of my screen time if I have other obligations during the day

If I follow the screen time contract, my reward is:

If I don't follow the screen time contract, my consequence is:

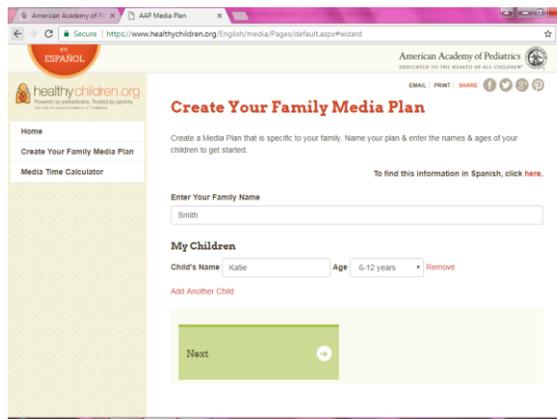
We will review our contract on this date: _____

Child signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Free Printable Behavior Charts.com

<http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/behavior%20contracts%20pdf/screen%20time%20contract%20fillable.pdf>



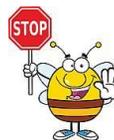
Physical activity after screen time

- Watching the rapid visual activity common to screen media is overstimulating. That's why the children appear "calm" when they are focused on a screen: they are OVER-focusing.
- Therefore the child REALLY needs to calm down... physical activity resets the vestibular system, that has artificially been on hold during screen-time.



Don't be afraid to say NO!

- Set limits and remember that you are your child's PARENT, not a friend
- Use timers and display family-rules visually
- Don't be afraid to say "No!" to your children if what they want is not what they need



Chores are good for us!

- Involve your child in 1 chore/ day
- Give your child responsibility: don't carry your child's school- bag, don't peel a banana for a 5-year-old, etc



age appropriate CHORES	
2-3 YEARS *make bed *pick up toys and books *put laundry in hamper *help feed pets *help wipe up messes *dust (put socks on hands)	4-5 YEARS *clear/set table *load dishwasher *empty silverware from dishwasher *take laundry to laundry room *match socks & fold *put away laundry *straighten room *get the newspaper/mail
6-8 YEARS *empty dishwasher *clean bathroom sinks & counters *sort laundry by colors *help pack school lunches *pull weeds & rake leaves *water plants/flowers *collect trash from wastebaskets	9-11 YEARS *clean toilets *take trash to curb *vacuum *mop floors *mow grass *food preparation (wash, cut, dice, measure) *walk pet
12+	*baby-sit siblings *wash windows *iron *clean interior/exterior of car *cook simple meals *laundry *clean refrigerator *make grocery list

Physical activity

- Spend 1hour of physical exercise a day in green space: walking, scooter, watching birds/insects
- Play 1 board-game per day



A good night's sleep

- Implement consistent sleep routine
- **Keep the bedrooms in your house technology-free**



Talk to each other

- Have a daily technology-free family dinner



It's ok to be bored!

- Avoid using technology in cars, restaurants, shopping centres.
- Use these moments as opportunities to train brains to function under "boredom". Boredom is the time when creativity awakens.



Saturday-treat-day: a card-board-box



Be the example for your children!

- Become your child's emotional coach:
 - Show them to recognize and deal with frustration and anger
 - Teach and show greeting, turn taking, sharing, empathy, table manners, conversation skills



Talk about screen-time

- TALK about the reasons for screen-time rules, especially with your teenagers
- The more children/ teenagers understand about what screens do, the more likely they'll be to follow healthy habits as they get older



AAP recommendations:

- For children **younger than 18 months**, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting.
- Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
- For children ages **2 to 5 years**, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- For children **ages 6 and older**, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviours essential to health.
- Designate media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.
- Have ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

AAP recommendations on screen-time

- <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/american-academy-of-pediatrics-announces-new-recommendations-for-childrens-media-use.aspx>
- Media and young minds:
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2591>
- Media use in school-aged children:
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2592>
- Media use and adolescents:
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2593>
- <https://handsonotrehab.com/screen-time-kids-guidelines/>
- <http://www.safeguardingni.org/esafety>
- <https://yourot.com/parenting-club/2017/5/24/what-are-we-doing-to-our-children>