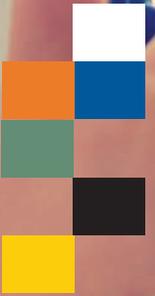


# Screen time



## A clinician's guide to counselling parents of young children

*Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world* is a Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) position statement that reviews the potential benefits and risks of screen media use among children under 5 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

**Counsel parents on the 4 Ms:** Minimize, mitigate, be mindful, model

### **Minimize screen time**

- Screen time for children under 2 years old is not recommended.
- 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.

### **Mitigate the potential negative effects of screen time**

- 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.
- Consider developing a family media plan (see [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca) for ideas).

### **Remember, children do not need exposure to digital media to learn**

- 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.



Canadian  
Paediatric  
Society

More information for parents is available  
at [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

**caring for kids**  
cps.ca  
Information for parents from Canada's paediatricians

1. Digital Health Task Force, Canadian Paediatric Society. Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world. June 2017. Available at [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca).

Funded with an unrestricted grant from:  
 TELUS

## 10 questions to consider asking families with young children

1

What kind of screens are in your home (e.g., TV, tablet, computer, smartphone)? Which do(es) your child use?

2

Is watching TV or programs/movies on other devices a shared family activity and a common way to relax? How often is a screen on in the background even though no one is watching?

3

Does anyone in the family use screens during mealtimes?

4

What content do you watch with your child? What does your child watch alone?

5

Do you encourage or discourage conversation with your child while you are using screens?

6

Do you ever watch adult or commercial programming with your child?

7

Does your child use screens while you do chores around the home? Often? Sometimes?

8

Are there any screen-based activities in your child's day care program? Do you know how often they are used?

9

Does your child use any kind of screen before bedtime? How long before bedtime? Is there a TV or computer in your child's bedroom? Does your child take mobile devices into the bedroom?

10

Does your family have rules or guidelines for screen use that everyone understands and shares?