

PSFO Tip Sheet for Parents

Limiting Screen Time for Young Children

Understanding the Guidelines: What's Recommended?

The **Australian Institute of Family Studies** provides the following screen time guidelines to support healthy development:

- **Under 2 years:** *No screen time (other than video chatting with loved ones)*
- **2 to 5 years:** *Maximum of 1 hour per day*
- **5 years and older:** *No more than 2 hours of sedentary recreational screen time daily (not including school-related use)*

Why Limiting Screen Time Matters

Too much screen time in the early years can affect many aspects of a child's growth and wellbeing. Studies show that **preschoolers with higher screen time** may experience:

- Lower spoken vocabulary and reading-readiness skills
- Slower processing speed and weaker memory
- Reduced back-and-forth interactions with others
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor eating and sleeping habits
- Behavioural and emotional challenges
- Delayed motor skills (both fine and gross)
- Weakened executive function (decision-making, problem-solving)
- Greater risk of weight gain and eye strain
- Exposure to inappropriate content

(Sources: The Interaction Coach, 2024; CNN Health, 2025; AIFS, 2025)

Practical Tips for Parents

1. Be a Role Model

Children learn by watching us! Show balanced tech use by taking regular breaks from screens and enjoying device-free activities.

2. Create Screen-Free Zones

Keep screens out of bedrooms and away from the dinner table. This encourages conversation, better sleep, and more mindful eating.

3. Set Clear, Consistent Limits

Stick to daily screen time limits based on your child's age. Use timers or built-in parental control settings to help keep track.

4. Offer Alternatives

Encourage creative play, outdoor adventures, books, music, puzzles, or art as fun options that don't involve screens.

5. Use Screens Together

When screen time does happen, try viewing this together. Talk about what your child is watching and ask open-ended questions to build comprehension and connection.

6. Schedule Device-Free Times

Build routines that don't involve screens—like quiet reading before bed.

7. Use Tech Wisely

Most, if not all, devices have parental control features. Look up instructions for your specific model to set time limits, and restrictions to block harmful content.

Need More Support?

If you are finding managing screen time tricky, please know you are not alone. You can reach out to your child's Kindergarten Teacher if you need further support.

Screens are a part of modern life, but balance is key. By setting limits and offering other alternatives, you're helping your child grow up with healthier habits, stronger relationships, and a curious, active mind.

For more helpful advice, tools, and practical strategies, visit:

[Raising Children Network – Managing Screen Time](#)