Learning Works for Kids

A Parent's Guide to Screen Time

Excessive screen time is the most frequently identified health concern for parents, according to a recent survey. Contemporary studies by Common Sense Media and the Kaiser Foundation indicate that kids spend an average of 9 hours per day using digital media. Here's a look at what screen time means for kids growing up in the digital age:

- Watching TV and listening to music are the 2 most popular screen-based activities
- 51% of screen time is interactive/communicative
- Tweens and teens spend about 1 hour 20 minutes per day playing video games
- 5 hours per day is spent on screen-based entertainment
- 75% of kids use texting, music, and other media while doing homework

We've long held the belief that it's important for kids to have a healthy and balanced "Play Diet" -- similar to the American Academy of Pediatrics' new "Media Diet" recommendation -- that includes physical, social, creative, and unstructured play as well as digital play. Rather than set strict limits on screen time in general, our team at LearningWorks for Kids advises parents to **focus on setting limits on video games, app usage, and television viewing**.

Setting Limits on Digital Play

Age	Time	Considerations
0-24 months	limited	Screen time should always be with an adult and is still secondary to traditional sensory, motor, and interpersonal experiences.
2-5 years	1 hr/day	Adults should still choose & supervise technology. Physical/social activities remain priorities, but technology can help kids learn academic skills!
6-9 years	90 mins/day	Adults should still choose technology, watching for violence and other inappropriate content. Limits are very important, although technology has become an important social activity.
10-13 years	90-120 mins/day	Parents should closely monitor chosen technology content and model good technology use, fostering a conversation of how to use it appropriately.
14+ years	120 mins/day	Continue to discuss and observe behavior, guiding content choices but allowing more screen time freedom as it is earned. Technology is now very important socially and academically!

Screen time limits *will* vary from family to family. The above guidelines should be adjusted based on your child's individual needs and abilities. It's also important to understand that there is no real harm in relaxing limits for any number of reasons, including holidays, sick/snow days, and long trips and waits.

For more information about setting screen time limits, check out these articles:
The AAP's Media and Children Communication Toolkit (includes Media Plan tool): goo.gl/aMlRnG
Screen Time Limits and the Individual Child: goo.gl/rk4ery
Helping Kids with ADHD Manage Screen Time: goo.gl/diur5H