

Screen Time/Technology Usage

What Role Does Technology Play in Society Today?

Technology is all around us and it is continuously becoming more integrated into our daily lives each day. Whether it be our cell phones in our pockets, the laptops we use for work, or an iPad that we use for leisure entertainment, technology can take many forms. Within the past few decades, technology has become readily available and more recently, technology has begun to play a large role in the lives of children and adolescents. Over the years, the amount of youth that are accessing technology and utilizing social media and playing video games has continued to increase and technology such as laptops and other electronic devices have become an essential part of a student's school day as many schools have ditched paper worksheets and textbooks and transitioned to online academics.



The Impact of Technology and Screen Time:

Youth, especially children, are extremely malleable and are in the midst of developing physically, emotionally, and socially. If you are a parent who worries about the impact technology and screen time might have on your child, **you are not alone**. A study conducted by the Pew Research Center showed that 71% of parents with children under the age of 12 share this concern. While technology **can be incredibly beneficial** in many ways such as for academic purposes, virtual meetings, and communicating with others, research has shown that **too** much screen time can lead to social, behavioral, and cognitive deficits. For example, **too** much screen time has been linked to problems with attention, delays in language and social development, obesity, aggression, and sleep disturbance.

Technology Guidelines for Your Child:

Age	Screen Time
Children 2 years old and younger	None
Children 3 – 5 years old	60 minutes a day
Children 6 and older	2 hours a day

***These guidelines are a suggestion; they are not meant to be a one-size-fits-all solution. You will have to decide what is appropriate for your child each day, taking into consideration numerous factors. With that being said, it is fair to follow the rule of everything in moderation while determining what screen time may look like for your child. ***



Tips for Technology Usage:

- **Pay attention to the quality of screen time your child is exposed to:** Make sure to preview apps, games, YouTube pages or other programs before exposing your child to the content.
 - Utilize parental controls if necessary to filter out negative or inappropriate content.
 - Find programs that actively engage or challenge your child to improve the quality of their screen time.
- **Set limits:** Discuss clear rules and guidelines and establish expectations for screen time.
 - Determine, set, and reinforce daily limits on screen time.
 - Use a log to keep track of screen time and set goals of how much screen time will be allowed each day.

- Determine certain times of the day, days of the week, or locations where technology is not welcomed (dinner time, before bed, outside, in public, in the bedroom, etc.)
- Some apps or devices have parental settings that utilize timers to limit screen time each day. Once screen time is reached, the device or app will shut down and a passcode will be needed for continued use.
- For older children and adolescents, explain the responsibility that comes with technology and how to appropriately use technology independently.

Day of the Week	iPad/Tablet	Video Games	Laptop	TV	Total Time
Monday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Tuesday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Wednesday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Thursday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Friday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Saturday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	
Sunday	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	__hr, __ min	

- **Promote unplugged activities:** Throughout the day, provide opportunities for your child to participate in unstructured activities without technology (playing outside, arts and crafts, playing with toys, baking, etc.)
 - Schedule planned unplugged activities throughout the day for your child to look forward to
- **Model appropriate technology use:** Your child is like a sponge! They may pick up on some of your habits.
 - Model appropriate screen time and technology usage by setting limits for yourself, following technology guidelines, and participating in unplugged activities with your child.

Recommended Reading for Children/Adolescents:

- “Unplugged Ninja: A Children’s Book About Technology, Screen Time, and Finding Balance” By Mary Nhin
- “Unplugged” By Steve Anthony
- “Unplugged” By Gordon Korman

Recommended Readings for Parents:

- “Screen time: How Electronic Media- From Baby Videos to Educational Software – Affects Your Young Child” By Lisa Guernsey
- “It’s Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens” By Danah Boyd
- “Parenting for a Digital Future: How Hopes and Fears About Technology Shape Children’s Lives” By Sonia Livingstone
- “Raising Humans in a Digital World” By Diana Graber
- “Unplug: Raising Kids in a Technology Addicted World” By J.D. Ph D. Melissa J. Westendorf and Lisa K. Strohman, J.D., Ph D.

Free Apps for Parents:

- OurPact: Parental Control App (Available on Android, iPhone, and iPad)
- 1Question Screen Time Control (Available on Android, iPhone, and iPad)
- AirDroid Parental Control (Available on Android, iPhone, and iPad)
- Qustodio (Available on Android, iPhone, and iPad)

References:

- Adapted from: World Health Organization (2019)
- Adapted from: Pew Research Center (2020)
- Adapted from: Mayo Clinic (n.d.)