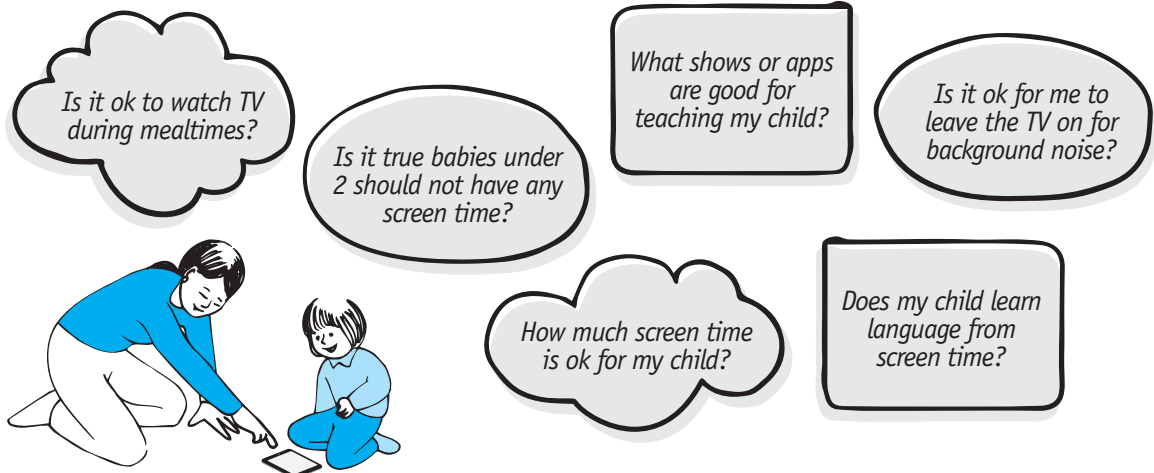




Screen Time and the Young Child

Screen time is any time in front of a screen. Some examples are TVs, movies, computer games, videos and handheld devices (e.g. smart phones, tablets)



Facts about screen time and the young child:

- Children learn best through real life experience: seeing, touching, hearing and smelling. They do not learn as well from screens because they can only hear and see them.
- Children need to move and play in order to be healthy. Screen time may keep children from moving and playing.
- Children learn language best from hearing their parents talk. When the screen is on, parents talk less to their children and children may not hear their parents talking.
- Background noise from screens may distract children from focusing on activities eg. family meals, story time.
- Children may focus on lights and sounds of a screen but not the content.
- Food advertisements aimed at children advertise foods that are often not healthy.



Screen Time Recommendations

The Canadian Pediatric Society (2017) recommends:

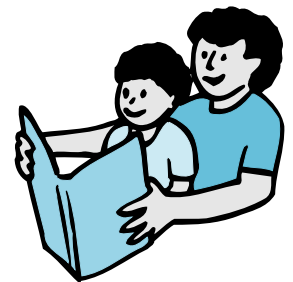
Age	Length of Time
Under 2 years	Avoid screen time.
2 to 5 years	No more than 1 hour per day

What can parents and caregivers do?

- Do screen time together: talk about what you see and hear on the screen and connect those ideas to your child's everyday experiences.
- Make a screen time plan with your family.
- Be aware of your own screen time use.
- Choose shows and screen time content carefully. Content should be slower-paced, at your child's age level, with positive messages about everyday themes.
- Make 'screen-free zones': i.e. kitchen table, bedroom.
- Parents and caregivers sometimes need a break. It's okay for your child to have quiet time in a screen free place.
- Children do not need screens on for entertainment or calming.
- Take time every day to play with your child, even for short periods. Let your child choose a play activity, for example, building blocks.

Find other activities to enjoy with your child:

- **Move** with your child everyday: ride a bike, walk, throw a ball, dance.
- **Play** with your child: sing songs, read books, play with toys and games.
- **Involve** your child in daily activities: cook, do laundry, set the table, plant flowers.
- **Enjoy** community activities together: go to the library, join a music group, play in the park.



Check out the following sites for more information:

Caringforkids.cps.ca
Healthychildren.org
Healthyfamiliesbc.ca
Parenting.vch.ca
Zerothreethree.org

Check with local libraries for more resources.

References:

Canadian Pediatric Society, Digital Health Task Force. Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world, Position Statement, June 2017: <http://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children> (Assessed June 1, 2017).

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