



Notes from research on the effects of

screen time



There are many articles and research studies surrounding the topic of screen time - the effects and how much is too much.

The information on this leaflet was sourced from:

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting/expert-views/screen-time.html>

<http://www.nightingalehospital.co.uk/condition/technology-addiction/>

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/technology-children-negative-impact_b_3343245.html

<http://home.bt.com/tech-gadgets/internet/tablet-smartphone-screen-time-advice-parents-kids-11364191314228>

<https://www.common sense media.org/screen-time/how-much-screen-time-is-ok-for-my-kids> <https://expert hometips.com/screen-time-reduce-tips-professionals-consequences>

We thought you would find it useful if we shared some of the key findings with you

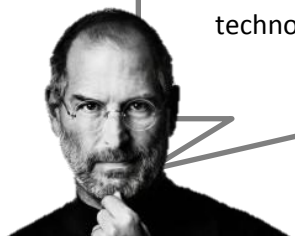
Possible effects of 'too much' screen time:

- Excessive screen time can neurologically damage a young person's developing brain
- Children can struggle with their attention skills and managing their behaviour because of the speed at which content can be reached, and over stimulation.
- Children can have a limited ability to be creative and imaginative.
- The blue light emitted from device screens can prevent the sleep hormone (melatonin) being released, leading to difficulty sleeping.
- Device usage can be addictive.

In 2010 when a reporter suggested his children must love the just-released iPad, Steve Jobs replied:

"They haven't used it. We limit how much technology our kids use at home."

New York Times, Sept 10th, 2014



How much screen time is 'too much'?

Research recommends that...

- ✓ Before the age of **18 months**, time with mobile phones, tablets etc. should be minimal
- ✓ **2-5yr olds** – no more than one hour a day
- ✓ **School age** children and teenagers should have a balance between using devices and a range of other activities. Some studies suggest spending time outside and taking part in physical activities. Activities that use all senses minimise the effects of withdrawal symptoms.

Ways to reduce screen time:

- Discuss as a family and agree on an appropriate amount of screen time for each person.
- Create screen-free zones in the house. E.g. no screens upstairs (This can also help with online safety)
- As a family, set each other the challenge of a screen free afternoon or day each week.
- Have a 'digital sunset' where there are no screens for an hour before bed. (If you try this yourself you might be surprised how much better you sleep!)

Alternatives to screen time

Sometimes it can be tricky to think up quick and easy-to-manage alternatives so, as a school, we have pulled together some practical ideas of activities you could try. Of course, these are just suggestions and there are many more online, particularly on Pinterest.

Outdoor activities

- Go on a bug hunt
- Go on a bike ride; for older children use a map to plan the route
- Climb a tree
- Make an outside fairy dwelling or a den for your friends
- Have a treasure hunt
- Go pond dipping
- Play hopscotch
- Teach some skipping rhymes
- Go on a picnic – make it first!
- Learn to roller-skate
- Do some weeding or plant a vegetable garden
- Stargaze
- Collect leaves – how many different sorts can you collect?
- Roll down a hill
- Draw on the patio with chalk
- Have a toy car wash
- Fly a kite

Educational activities

- Do a science investigation (the Royal Institution has some suggestions to get you started <http://www.rigb.org/families/experimental>)
- Play 20 questions
- Complete a jigsaw
- Solve some brainteasers as a family
- Find out five facts about a country
- Play I-spy
- Write a family newsletter
- Play the guessing game 'Who am I?'
- Read each other a story

Creative activities

- Make a flower necklace
- Make a printed picture using different household items as stamps
- Turn newspaper into a pirate's hat
- Make just about anything from a tissue inner roll
- Get creative with lollipop sticks
- Build something out of Lego
- Create a family flag or coat of arms
- Learn origami
- Make a sock puppet
- Make friendship bracelets

Family fun activities

- Try out some face painting on each other
- Make a fort
- Draw a picture blindfolded
- Plan an indoor picnic – give the children a budget, go shopping and make it!
- Plan and carry out a random act of kindness
- Cook or bake together
- Draw a family portrait
- Invent a new language
- Interview a family member and create a family history
- Invent your own board game
- Make an obstacle course
- Play hide and seek
- Put together a time capsule
- Take fun family photos and create an album