

# Screen Time

## How much is ok

Watching TV, DVDs, using computers, handheld games, mobile phones and devices, are all screen time.

Too much screen time is not good for babies and young children.

Screen time often involves sitting or lying down for a long time. Time for movement and play is important for growth and development. Too much screen time may mean children:

- do not grow and develop as well
- do not learn to play with others as well
- do not learn to talk as well
- have poorer motor skills (walking, jumping and catching a ball)
- may have trouble with eye development.

## Do screen activities help babies and young children learn?

Screen based activities for children under two have not been shown to help learning and development.

Babies and young children learn and develop from talking, singing, reading or playing with you or others.

Try not to use mobile phones and devices to keep them busy or quiet too often. Regularly using screens in place of playtime is not good for children's development.

## How much screen time is ok

We recommend:

- no screen time for children under two years
- less than one hour per day for children two to five years old.

These are not set rules but good to keep in mind.

## Ideas on how to limit screen time

- Set family limits and rules around screen time.
- Have a spot at home for smart phones and tablets to be stored out of sight.
- Be a role model – limit your own screen time too.
- Make mealtime screen-free.
- Make children's bedrooms screen-free zones.
- Set a timer to remind yourself and your child when screen time is up.

## Play activity ideas

### For the home

- play mat for floor play
- picture and story books
- drawing, art or craft box
- play dough
- puzzles
- music, singing and dancing audio books
- cardboard box play – create beds, cars or houses for toys
- felt picture/activity boards.

### For out and about

Make an 'out and about bag'. Fill a bag or container with toys your child likes to play with. Swap the toys often to keep the bag interesting. Your child may like:

- pencils or crayons and colouring in books
- sticker books
- stamps and a note pad
- books and toy catalogues
- toy cars, animal figures and rattles
- a small pot of play dough and cutters
- balls.



#### Take a picnic and get out and about

Pack some food. Find a place to eat outside like the park or beach.



#### Visit your local play ground

Outdoor play is important for growing strong muscles.



#### Go for an explore

Visit the local park, beach or nature reserve. Collect some 'treasures' in a container.

## Want to know more

National physical activity recommendations for children under five are available at [www.health.tas.gov.au/healthykids](http://www.health.tas.gov.au/healthykids)