

**My child is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.  
The recommended amount of screen time  
for my child is:**

- Seven hours per day
- One hour per day
- Two hours per day
- Limited to Facetime and Skype only

**Too much screen time can cause my child to:**

- Get less sleep
- Gain extra weight
- Have problems developing social skills
- All of the above

**I can do the following to help manage my  
child's screen time (check all that applies):**

- Keep screens out of the bedroom
- Don't allow screens during mealtimes
- Allow my child to use my phone when I am busy  
and he is bored
- Check my Facebook and email account constantly

**What is one change you will make to  
decrease your child's screen time?**



This institution is an equal opportunity provider:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410  
Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This publication was issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), an equal opportunity employer and provider. 5,000 copies were printed by OU | University Printing at a cost of \$1,165.33. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in compliance with section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes and is available for download at www.documents.ok.gov. | Issued July 2019 | 19190WIC | **ODH No. P1296** |



Answer the following questions by using the letter of the photo that you feel best applies to the statement.

These parents are likely to have better communication with their children.

These children are likely to have better social skills and relationships with their friends.

This family is more likely to get better sleep at night.

This family is less likely to suffer from health problems such as obesity.

# Cut Back on Screen Time



Screen time is the amount of time your child spends watching videos and television shows, playing video games, or using a computer, tablet, iPad, or smart phone.

**Circle the screens used by your family:**

TV Computer Video Games Smart Phone iPad Tablet

### Does this scene look familiar?

If you take a look around the mall, grocery store or restaurant, you can see how attached children are to electronic devices. Unfortunately, technology has become an addiction for many children. Older kids are spending an average of seven hours a day in front of screens. Why is screen time so harmful and how much screen time should a child have each day?



### Why is too much screen time harmful?

- **Weight Issues**—Excessive screen time has been linked to obesity. Any device with an electronic screen usually requires the need to sit down or be still while using. In addition to being inactive, children are also exposed to food and beverage advertising which causes them to consume more unhealthy foods and calories.
- **Sleep Problems**—The more time children spend watching screens, especially in the evening, the less sleep they get. Loss of sleep is very harmful for children due to their developing minds and body.
- **Poor Social Development**—When kids spend too much time with electronics, they miss out on developing important social skills needed to interact with other people. Employment, relationships, and simple social manners will be limited and awkward if a child never develops normal social skills.

### How much screen time should my child get?

Child less than 2 years	Limit screen time to Facetime and Skype only.
Child between 2-5 years	Limit screen time to one hour. This one hour should be a high-quality, educational program. You should watch the program with your child to help them understand what they are seeing and how it applies to them.
Parents (YOU)!	Limit screen time around children. Your children learn by watching you. Set good habits that don't involve screen time.

*(Recommendations are from the American Academy of Pediatrics)*

### Tips for managing your kids' screen time:

- **Hold off on giving your kids a device:** Don't be pressured to give your child a tech device at such a young age. There is no need for him to have his own device. You will have more control over a device you allow him to use rather than one that is his own.
- **Keep the bedroom screen-free.** Don't allow screens in your child's bedroom. Children who have a TV, computer or video game in their bedroom spend more unsupervised time in front of the screen. These kids also get less sleep every night.
- **Participate in screen time.** Make screen time a family activity as much as possible. Have family movie night or game night and talk about what you saw. Show interest in videos they are watching and games they are playing. When your child shows interest in social media, talk about safety and privacy.
- **Be prepared with fun alternatives.** Kids are going to request more time to watch videos/shows and play games. Be prepared with other fun activities so you will be less likely to give in to their demands. Play together as a family. Go on a walk, play a game or dance to music.
- **Monitor your own screen use.** Children learn by watching you. If you are responding to every message and scrolling through Facebook, you have far less authority to limit their screen time.
- **Avoid snacking while watching TV.** For each hour of television viewed per day, children consume an additional 167 calories.
- **Value family meals and car rides.** Eat meals together as a family and enjoy spending time talking to each other. Your best conversations with your kids take place during meals and in the car. Value those times with your children. Don't let the TV and phones steal them from you.
- **Set limits and stick to them.** Be specific about when, where and how much time screens are allowed. Be sure to let your child know the consequences of breaking the rules.

