



# Kids and Screens

**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under 2 and less than 2 hours per day for older children.**

## Excessive screen time puts young children at risk.

- Forty percent of 3-month-old infants are regular viewers of screen media [2], and 19% of babies 1 year and under have a TV in their bedroom [3].
- Screen time can be habit-forming: the more time children engage with screens, the harder time they have turning them off as older children. [4]
- Screen time for children under 3 is linked to irregular sleep patterns [5] and delayed language acquisition [6].
- The more time preschool children and babies spend with screens, the less time they spend interacting with their parents. [7] Even when parents co-view, they spend less time talking to their children than when they're engaged in other activities. [8]
- Toddler screen time is also associated with problems in later childhood, including lower math and school achievement, reduced physical activity, victimization by classmates [9], and increased BMI [10].

On average, preschool children spend 32 hours a week with screen media. [1]

- Direct exposure to TV and overall household viewing are associated with increased early childhood aggression. [11]
- The more time preschool children spend with screens, the less time they spend engaged in creative play [7] – the foundation of learning [12], constructive problem solving [13], and creativity [14].
- On average, preschool children see nearly 25,000 television commercials, a figure that does not include product placement. [15]

**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents create an electronic-media-free environment in children's bedrooms.**

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## School-age children are also at risk from excessive screen time.

In a survey of youth ages 8-18, nearly 1 in 4 said they felt "addicted" to video games. [25]



- Including multitasking, children ages 8 -18 spend average of 4 ½ hours per day watching television, 1 ½ hours using computers, and more than an hour playing video games. [16]
- Black and Hispanic youth spend even more time with screen media than their White peers. [16]
- Time spent with screens is associated with:
  - » childhood obesity [17]
  - » sleep disturbances [18]
  - » attention span issues [19]



- Children with 2 or more hours of daily screen time are more likely to have increased psychological difficulties, including hyperactivity, emotional and conduct problems, as well as difficulties with peers. [20]
- Adolescents who watch 3 or more hours of television daily are at especially high risk for poor homework completion, negative attitudes toward school, poor grades, and long-term academic failure. [21]
- Adolescents with a television in their bedroom spend more time watching TV and report less physical activity, less healthy dietary habits, worse school performance, and fewer family meals. [22]
- Children with a television in their bedroom are more likely to be overweight. [23]
- Especially high rates of bedroom televisions (70-74%) have been seen among racial/ethnic minority children aged 2 to 13 years. [24]

## Research shows the benefits of reduced screen time.

- Reducing screen time can help prevent childhood obesity. [26]
- Children who spend less time watching television in early years tend to do better in school, have a healthier diet, be more physically active, and are better able to engage in schoolwork in later elementary school. [9]
- Television viewing at a young age is associated with later behavioral problems, but not if heavy viewing is discontinued before age 6. [27]
- Limiting exposure to television during the first 4 years of life may decrease children's interest in it in later years. [4]

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