

Inactivity and Screen Time

Australian Government Department of Health

Watching TV and playing computer games are common activities for kids BUT kids who spend long periods of time inactive are more likely to have poor physical, social and intellectual development.

Activities that involve sitting down and that do not need a lot of energy are called 'sedentary'.

Some sedentary activities are good for kids:

- reading and looking at books
- listening to stories
- quiet play such as art and craft, drawing and puzzles.
- Some sedentary activities are not good for kids:
- watching TV and DVDs
- playing computer and electronic games
- sitting in a car seat, high chair or stroller for more than 1 hour at a time when they are awake.

Screen time - birth to 2 years

Evidence suggests that TV watched in the first 2 years of life may be connected with delays in language development.

Recommendation

Children younger than 2 years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games). Babies and young kids need: plenty of time to move – to play, reach and touch time to practice new movements when learning to crawl and walk.

Turn off the TV

Babies and kids under 2 should not spend any time watching TV or DVDs.

Watching a screen at a young age can:

- limit time for active play and learning
- reduce opportunities for language development
- reduce the length of time young kids can stay focused
- affect the development of the full range of eye movement.

Screen time - kids 2 to 5 years

Evidence suggests that long periods of screen time are connected with:

- less active, outdoor and creative play
- slower development of language skills
- poor social skills
- an increased risk of being overweight.

Recommendation

For children 2 to 5 years of age, sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and electronic games) should be limited to less than 1 hour per day. Kids will benefit more from talking, singing, reading, listening to music or playing with other kids.

Turn off the TV

Kids 2 to 5 years should be limited to less than 1 hour of screen time each day.

When kids watch TV or DVDs or use other electronic media like computers, hand-held games and other electronic games, they miss out on active play.

If kids stay up at night watching TV and DVDs – they also miss out on sleep.