

Reading for Success

Monitor your child's screen time

Television and computers can provide benefits for your child's learning. But prolonged sitting in front of a screen can also have negative effects. Research shows that too much screen time can interfere with physical activity, homework, family time—and reading. Reading often becomes a chore instead of an important and fun activity. To help you take charge of your child's screen time, follow these guidelines:

Did you know?

- **The average U.S. home** has the TV on more than 51 hours per week.
- **Kids eight to 18 spend more time** on screen time than they spend on any other waking activity—nearly four hours a day in front of a TV screen, plus almost two additional hours playing on the computer and playing video games.
- **An average U.S. child will see** 360,000 commercials before graduating from high school.

How much is too much?

Too much screen time can take away from the time your child should spend learning, exploring and reading.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting total media time to one or two hours of *quality* programming per day.



Control TV viewing

- **Keep the TV** out of your child's bedroom.
- **Turn the TV off** at mealtime.
- **Establish a viewing schedule.** Choose programs carefully with your child.
- **Issue tickets,** each for 30 minutes of screen time. When tickets are gone, the screen is off.
- **Ask to see a weekly log** of shows your child watches. You might also have your child write reviews!

- **Encourage your child** to ask questions about the programs.
- **Turn the TV off** when no one is watching.

What about video games?

- **Know what games** your child is playing at home and with friends. Talk to other parents.
- **Preview games** before allowing your child to play unsupervised.
- **Set limits.** Have your child read for a longer period than playing video games.
- **Set a kitchen timer.** When the timer rings, game time is over.

Monitor computer use

- **Keep your home computer** in a central location where you can monitor its use.
- **Don't permit your child** to surf random websites. Approve the sites your child visits.
- **Strictly prohibit sharing of personal** information and images online.
- **Check with the teacher** for appropriate school-related sites.

Remember: Time spent watching TV or playing video games is time *not spent* reading!

