TECH TALKS WITH YOUR CHILDREN
Learning to manage digital platforms in the home

The purpose of this resource is to help parent caregivers understand how digital media affects children in overall health and wellbeing. With this, parent caregivers can gain confidence to support their children in developing healthy habits.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Screen use negatively affects children's overall **sleep quality**
- Inactive screen time may lead to **obesity** and **poor physical fitness**
- Long screen use **strains eyes** and can cause physical issues due to **poor posture**

Children should get at least 1 hour of physical activity daily!

When parent caregivers join in play, children are more likely to explore and enjoy outdoor activities

Did you know a human's attention span is 8 seconds? That's one second less than a goldfish!

This makes it hard to concentrate on non-digital tasks

MENTAL HEALTH

- Screen time can cause **irritability** and **dependence** on screens
- Fast-paced digital content **shortens attention span**
- Media use can **increase feelings of loneliness and insecurity** through social comparison

Mental health problems like anxiety and depression can arise from this

Encouraging group play teaches kids teamwork and creative problem-solving skills

SOCIAL HEALTH

- Limited social interactions from **excessive screen time** impacts **communication** and **language skills**
- Impaired impulse control affects patience and cooperation in social settings

Brain changes from screen time can make it harder for children to understand others' emotions

For further information on the impacts on physical health, visit
www.medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000355.htm

For further information on the impacts on mental and social health, visit
www.psych.on.ca/Public/Blog/2024/The-Impact-of-Screen-Time-on-Mental-Health-What-Pa

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DEVELOPMENT

- **High** amounts of screen use may **decrease children's critical thinking** and **reasoning**
- Screen usage disrupts hormones, affecting energy and healthy development

Excessive long term screen use can lead to thinning of the brain cortex and shrinkage of the frontal lobe, impacting early childhood development

Exercise your brain by reading, drawing and socializing!
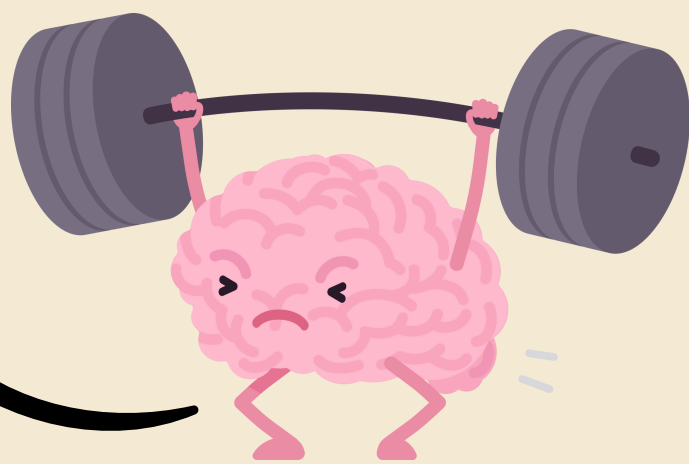
Aim for less than 2 hours per day!

Follow available guidelines on screen usage and setting boundaries to support healthy digital habits

SETTING BOUNDARIES

- Consistent **screen time limits improve sleep quality**, **focus** and **physical well-being**
- Encouraging **regular breaks** during screen time **reduce eye strain** and **improves concentration**
- Encourage family meals and bedrooms without screens

This can encourage family connection

Sharing personal information like location, school or full name can expose children to online risks

CYBERSAFETY

- Regular check-ins and **open conversations** about internet safety help **protect** kids from online threats
- Strong **privacy settings** limit who can access your child's profile and contact them
- **Preview** videos and games you allow for your children to **minimize exposure to inappropriate content**
- Monitor child's live streaming use

Watch videos and play games together to guide healthy screen habits and monitor screen use

For further information on children's growth and development, visit www.choc.org/primary-care/ages-stages/

For further information on setting healthy boundaries, visit www.aboutkidshealth.ca/screentime

For further information on internet safety, visit www.commonsense.org/education/articles/23-great-lesson-plans-for-internet-safety

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