Screen Time
Information and Advice for Parents

What is Recreational Screen Time?

Screen-time refers to time spent using a variety of technological gadgets for entertainment purposes, such as iPhones/iPads, gaming consoles, TV's and computers. This does not include using these devices for school/homework.

Having clear rules, setting limits and not having screen-based media in bedrooms are associated with fewer hours of screen-time in adolescents (Ramirez, Journal of Adolescent Health, 2011)

Young People should engage in less than 2 hours of screen time per day
- The Australian Guidelines, Australian Department of Health & Ageing, 2014

84% of Australian teenagers spend more than 2 hours per day engaged in screen-based recreation.

Setting Screen-time Rules

Establishing a set of household rules can help your teens limit their screen-time. Try to limit the number of household rules and word the rules positively when possible. Based on previous research, we recommend the following rules:

1. No screens at dinner time as this is important family time (or limit times/week).
2. Establish curfews, i.e., no screens after 10.30pm as sleep is important for mental and academic performance.
3. No screens in bedrooms at night (This will help monitor screen activity and help safe guard your child).
4. Parents must be able to see profiles on social media. This is done not to intrude on privacy but to keep your teens safe as there are many risks to youth using social media including:
• Cyberbullying and online harassment.
• Sharing too much information about themselves or others.
• Future job opportunities may be in jeopardy.

Encourage behaviours other than screen-time, i.e. reading, drawing or physical activity. Provide a positive environment to encourage appropriate screen use – this may mean relocating TV's out of bedrooms or even switching off all technology and encourage socialising. By limiting your teen's exposure to screens and social media you're limiting the chances of them being negatively influenced.

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