**Screen time - Parent Guide**

Exploring the issues of screen time and how to set boundaries

**What should I know about screen time?**

Screen time is a widely discussed topic. Some claim too much screen time is bad for children, while others say the negative effects are exaggerated.

What is not in doubt is that children are spending longer than ever looking at screens.

Research has proven that screen time can have many benefits – when used in the right way.

**So how much is too much?**

It is not really a question of ‘how much’. Not all screen time is equal. What your child does on their device is far more important than how long they spend doing it.

Digital technology offers ways to explore, create, keep in touch with family and friends, as well as being a vital source of education.

But it’s important to not to ignore the risks of being online. Children could be exposed to risks such as misinformation, traumatic news and adult content. These can cause anxiety and confusion – as well as more serious harms.

**So how do I strike a balance?**

It’s best to consider screen time based on the needs of your child – including their age. Are they learning? Are they being creative? Are they socialising positively? Are they varying what they do? Do they seem happy? Are they getting enough sleep?

Children might need extra time on devices to complete school work – but may also need more time on screens to play and socialise, through social media or online games. Downtime for your child is important, but you should also discuss taking breaks.

**Do I have to set rules and boundaries?**

It is always good to give children clear and consistent boundaries. But it’s also important to help your child think independently about their screen time.

You may find your child is thoughtful about their own screen time habits when you discuss them. Agreeing boundaries together will help develop their ability to self-moderate and know when it is time to switch off.

**More Info**

[Read our guide to digital resilience and how to negotiate boundaries](https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/morearticles/digital-resilience-a-parents-guide)

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