



Screen Time

What is screen time?

- Screen time includes time spent in front of televisions, computers, smart phones, tablets, video games, movies, and social media.

Screen time during COVID-19:

- You might notice that your child has more screen time during COVID-19. This is common because of virtual learning, physical distancing and other public health measures.
- Screen time that involves learning and other virtual programming for children should be supported during COVID-19.
- Screen time that helps to connect your child virtually with important people in their lives should be encouraged. Keeping virtual social connections during COVID-19 can help with your family’s mental health. For more information on how to support your child’s mental health during COVID-19 see www.hamilton.ca/cymentalhealth
- Balance the extra screen time your child is having with other activities where your child can move their body. Make time for physical activity, including outdoor play time, while following current public health guidelines.

How much screen time should my child have each day?

- Use the screen time recommendations below to help guide how much screen time your child has each day.
- During COVID-19 your family might need more screen time than usual. You know your family’s needs the best.

The screen time recommendations below were created before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Age of Child	Recommended Amount of Screen Time*
Less than 2 years	0 hours per day
2 to 4 years	Less than 1 hour per day
5 to 11 years	No more than 2 hours per day, less screen time is better

*according to the [Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#).





General tips for screen time:

- Be a good example for your child. Role model healthy screen time habits.
- Start good media habits when children are young to help them develop healthy habits that last a lifetime.

How can I make screen time a better learning experience?

- Make sure content is right for your child's age.
- Choose content that your child can relate to.
- Sit together and talk about what you are watching, ask questions, label, and describe what you are seeing.
- Get moving by acting out what your child is seeing.

How can I decrease my family's screen time?

- Set limits on the amount of screen time that your child has each day.
- Keep screen media out of your child's bedroom and limit screen time to areas where it can be monitored.
- Turn off devices when they are not being used.
- Encourage active play instead of screen time.
- Choose activities that fit your child's age. Refer to www.lookseechecklist.com to find out what your child can do.
- Decrease screen time slowly, by 1 half hour per week, until recommended amounts are met.

For more information about screen time, see the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines at www.csep.ca/guidelines

