

YOUNG CHILDREN AND THE HEALTHY USE OF SCREENS

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND
CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Produced by the Early Childhood and Youth sectors
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Website:
http://www.dsp.santemontreal.qc.ca/dossiers_thematiques/tout_petits_familles.html

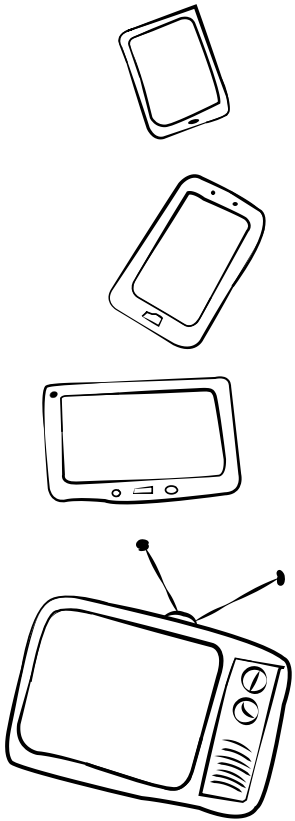


Televisions, computers, tablets, smart phones, game consoles: All these screens can limit the time kids spend moving, playing outdoors and having fun! Being exposed to screens for long periods of time can harm children's development and is associated with child obesity.

A number of countries have developed recommendations aimed at limiting the time children spend in front of screens. The Direction de santé publique de l'Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal (DSP) has also decided to take action.

An expert panel to guide parents and child care providers

The DSP has put together an expert panel that has adopted recommendations issued by several international organizations. The experts, from the health, community and education sectors, have agreed on five recommendations to guide parents and child care providers in controlling the time children spend in front of screens.



How to manage young children's screen time

Experts recommend:

- **That children under two years old not spend time in front of screens.**

Children under two learn better when they interact with people than when they are in front of screens.

- **That children aged two to five spend less than an hour a day in front of screens.**

Free play, physical activity and spending time with family and friends are encouraged to enhance child development.

- **That children not be exposed to violent content.**

When viewed at a young age, on-screen violence can negatively affect children later on, especially regarding success, attention and concentration in school.

- **Promoting educational content.**

It is best to choose what to watch based on the youngest viewers in the household.

- **Putting screens in common rooms and not in children's bedrooms.**

A TV in a child's room increases the opportunities for the child to watch inappropriate content and can harm sleep.

It is better to be with the child and to discuss what he or she is watching.