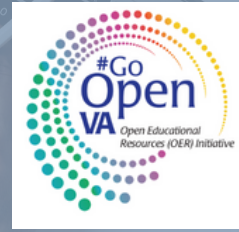


# Screen Time

GoOpenVA.org/hubs/ISAC

Safeguarding children remains the utmost priority. With the growing concerns regarding the frequent use of screens on the health and well-being of children, it is important for educators and caretakers to actively address the use of digital devices in school and at home. This information is provided to support a balance between the physical and digital worlds ensuring that devices are being used in appropriate, meaningful, and empowering ways.



## Goals for Digital Citizenship



### Communication with Trusted Adults

Establish open communication with responsible adults about any online activities



### Copyright and Sharing

Understand copyright laws on written materials, photographs, music, and videos shared online



### Privacy and Sharing Personal Information

Consider the risk of transmitting personal information on the internet and the importance of privacy protection



### Recognition, Avoidance & Reporting

Identify potentially dangerous, illegal online activities, including potential solicitation by predators, deceptive communications, and harassment or cyberbullying; Report incidents of illegal online activity



### Screen Time

Ensure activities involving technology provide empowered learning, creative communication, global collaboration, knowledge constructing, innovative design, computational thinking, and digital citizenship



### Social Media and Communication

Use social media in a safe and responsible way; Understand the advantages of social media, as well as the potential harms including addiction, publication of misinformation, negative effects on mental health, and the permanent nature of content created on social media

## Strategies for Home

- Become educated about potential negative effects of excessive screen time in terms of social, emotional, and neurobiological effects and methods to mitigate them.
- Encourage your child to spend at least an hour outside every day to take advantage of natural light, physical activity, and multi-distance focal points.
- Be aware of potential signs of eye strain tied to screen time such as frequent eye rubbing, squinting, closing one eye to see better.
- Take breaks from the screen every 20-30 minutes.
- Monitor sleep patterns to ensure screen time is not interfering with children's attainment of adequate sleep. Stop using digital devices 60-90 minutes prior to bedtime.

## Impacts of Screen Time

### Physical

Spending too much time in front of screens often leads to a sedentary lifestyle, increasing the risk of obesity and related health issues. Lack of physical activity can also affect muscle development and overall fitness levels.

### Sleep

Screen time, particularly before bedtime, can disrupt sleep patterns. The blue light emitted by screens suppresses the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep, making it harder for children and adolescents to fall asleep and stay asleep. Poor sleep quality can impact mood, cognitive function, and overall well-being.

### Development

Excessive screen time may lead to reduced face-to-face interactions, hindering the ability to understand and empathize with others. Excessive use of social media can also contribute to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, especially when children and adolescents compare themselves unfavorably to others online. Prolonged screen time may interfere with attention span, concentration, and the ability to focus on tasks for extended periods. Fast-paced media content can also contribute to attention difficulties and impulsivity.



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