

Screen Time

The Effects and Recommendations



With our busy modern lives, the use of technological devices are increasing. Society has moved from desk top screens to handheld screens, our children have moved from television-based video gaming and viewing to handheld devices. The impact of this technology is already being noted in the science, radiologists now report seeing what they are calling the “Phone-Bone”. Then there are the other well documented effects of this exposure to technology:

- Decreased respiratory function
- Increased incidence of neck pain and head aches
- Poor sleep
- Increased risk of obesity
- Has been linked to behaviour problems and violence
- Has been associated with decreased academic performance
- Associated with an increased risk of mental health problems

With all the negative effects of too much screen time, what do the experts recommend as appropriate? Based on the scientific evidence available, the World Health Organization, Australian Parents Council and the Sydney Children’s Hospital all recommend the following guidelines for screen time based on age:

- Under 2 years old – ZERO screen time (including watching television, electronic media, DVDs, computers and electronic games).
- 2-5 years – Less than 1 hour p/day.
- 5-17 years – Less than two hours p/day. (The Children’s hospital recommendations vary here, they suggest discussing the study requirements of the child as 2 hours per/day may not be enough)