

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.**

And 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 do 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 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.**