

NOVEMBER MESSAGE FROM FRASER HEALTH: SCREEN TIME!

Why does screen time matter?

Children and families are increasingly spending time on screens such as TVs, computers, tablets, smartphones and gaming devices. Too much screen time can take away from activities that are essential for healthy development, like spending time with family and friends, playing outdoors and getting a good night's sleep.

Choosing quality screen time at home

Not all screen time is the same. Educational screen time, such as homework, online classes or video calls with family, can be beneficial and support learning and connection. Recreational screen time includes activities like watching videos, gaming or scrolling on devices for entertainment. Too much recreational screen use can have negative impacts on childhood growth and development, such as:

- Less time for social interaction and family connection.
- Less physical activity and outdoor play.
- Less opportunity for creativity, reading and other offline interests.
- Negative impacts on mental well-being and behaviour.

How much screen time is recommended?

According to the [Canadian 24-Hour Movement](#) Guidelines:

- **Under 2 years:** Screen time is not recommended.
- **Ages 2–5:** Limit to less than one hour per day.
- **Ages 5 and older:** Limit to less than two hours per day.

Simple ways to encourage healthy screen habits

The Canadian Paediatric Society highlights the “four M’s” to help families build healthy routines:

- **Manage:** Set clear rules and limits, such as creating a family media plan.
- **Meaningful use:** Encourage content that supports learning and active engagement.
- **Model:** Show healthy screen habits in your own daily routines.
- **Monitor:** Watch for signs that screen use is replacing important offline activities.

Helpful resources

- Fraser Health [Screen Time for Children](#)
- Fraser Health [Screen Time Brochure for Caregivers - Ages 5-12](#)