# Managing screen time

**What counts as screen time?**
Screen time includes watching TV, using a cell phone or tablet, working on a computer, or playing video games. Because screen time is a sedentary activity, it can have a negative impact on kids' overall health.

Most American children spend about 3 hours a day watching TV. Added together, all types of screen time can add up to as much as 5 to 7 hours a day.

All of this screen time can:
• Make it hard for your child to sleep at night
• Raise your child's risk for attention problems, aggression, anxiety and depression
• Raise your child's risk for gaining too much weight (obesity)

**Ways to set limits and manage screen time:**
• Set boundaries and times that kids can have screen time.
• Make your own family media use plan. Decide when, where and how much daily screen time is appropriate.
• Parents can model good behavior by reading books or getting outside instead of being on the computer or watching TV.
• Create tech-free zones. Keep family mealtimes, other family and social gatherings, and children's bedrooms screen free.
• Screen time, especially in the hours before bedtime, is associated with poor quality sleep for both kids and adults.

Media and digital devices are an integral part of our world today. The benefits of these devices, if used moderately and appropriately, can be great. Research has shown, however, that face-to-face time with family, friends and teachers plays an even more important role in promoting kids' learning and healthy development.

**The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) identifies screen time as time spent using digital media for entertainment purposes.**

**CURRENT AAP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**For children ages 2 to 5, screen time should be limited to one hour per day. For kids ages 6 and older, parents can determine the restrictions for time spent using screens, as well as monitor the types of digital media their children use. Babies are most vulnerable to screens, so screen time is not recommended.**

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