



REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Promoting Your Child's Healthy Media Diet (2 to 6 years)

Excessive screen time can interfere with children's development of friendships, impact their physical fitness, contribute to obesity and lack of sleep, and decrease their interest in reading and their motivation for school success. Violent screen time content has been shown to increase children's aggressive behavior and hostility. Here are some tips for helping your child develop healthy screen time habits, while minimizing their negative effects.

Set household rules regarding how much screen time your child is allowed. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following:

- For children under 2 years, discourage all screen time.
- For children 2-5 years, limit to one hour/day of high quality programming
- For children 6-12 limit to 90 minutes/day

Supervise and monitor the content children are consuming. Decide which program, games, or sites are healthy as well as those that cannot be viewed or played. Websites such as Common Sense Media <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/> can provide a guidance on media content that is appropriate for children of different ages.

Take an active role in your children's media education by watching TV programs with them and participating in their computer games so you can mitigate their negative effects and enhance their use as a way to promote interaction, connection and creativity. For example you can promote your child's social skills and empathy by talking about movie characters who are sensitive and caring, or in other cases, you can discuss a bad decision or disrespectful behavior of a character. When watching commercials, have discussions about the purpose of commercials and the messages that they send about unhealthy food or consumerism.

Keep all screens in common rooms of your house so that you can monitor or track your child's screen time use. Help your child turn off the screen when he or she has reached the daily limit. Praise and reward your child for healthy viewing habits and following the screen time rules.

Set a bedtime that is not altered by screen time activities and avoid screen time 1 hour prior to bedtime. Don't put computers, smartphones or TVs in your child's bedroom.

Strive for balance between screen time activities and other activities involving social interactions, making friends, physical activity, reading or some other special play time. Have some designated time periods or days that are "screen time-out" times for all family members. Promote a healthy media diet that encourages social, emotional and physical health.

Set a good example by modeling healthy screen time habits.

See <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx> for a tool developed by American Academy of Pediatrics to develop your own family media plan