

“SCREEN” TIME CAN BE HARMFUL TO YOUR CHILDREN’S HEALTH

Screen time, or time spent watching TV, playing video games or in front of a computer, has been linked with many harmful effects to children’s health. Research shows the strongest predictor of childhood obesity is the number of hours spent watching TV, surfing the net or playing computer or video games. Other research has shown that:

- ◆ Children who watch more TV eat more calories and drink more pop.
- ◆ Children who watch TV eat more low-nutrient, high-calorie foods.
- ◆ Academic achievement drops sharply for children who watch more than 10 hours of TV a week.
- ◆ TV interferes with the development of intelligence, thinking and imagination skills.
- ◆ TV interferes with language development.
- ◆ TV impedes development of longer attention spans.
- ◆ Certain types of TV cultivate aggressive or violent behaviours.

It is recommended that children accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and for proper gross and fine motor development.

The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend limiting recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours a day and limiting the overall amount of sedentary time spent sitting and indoors each day.

Encourage your children to be active by:

- ◆ Playing outdoor or indoor games.
- ◆ Being active as a family. Go for a walk or hike together every day before or after dinner.
- ◆ Taking advantage of after school programs.
- ◆ Finding an activity or sport they like to do. Sign up for a group that meets regularly at the local recreation centre.

For more information contact:

- ◆ www.csep.ca
- ◆ www.activehealthykids.ca
- ◆ www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide
- ◆ www.limitv.org