

SFC-SA Screen Time Guidelines

***Based on WorldHealth Organisation Guidelines 2019**



AGE	TIME	IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME	PARENTING TIPS
0–2 years	0 hours/day	• Impaired ability to focus • Missed developmental milestones • Underdeveloped fine motor control • Delayed language development	• No screens except video calls • Prioritise face-to-face interaction and sensory play • Encourage movement, exploration and real-world bond
2–5 years	1 hour/day	• Impaired eyesight • Poor body control • Expectation of instant feedback • Delayed language and cognitive development	• All screen time should be co-viewed with a parent • Discuss what was watched to build early critical thinking and emotional awareness • Choose calm, developmentally appropriate content • Prioritise imaginative play, storytelling, and hands-on activities
5–10 years	2 hours/day	• Weak emotional impulse control • Social anxiety • Obsessive interest in games/videos • Impaired memory development	• No personal device ownership • Use the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes of screen use, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away to protect eye health • Encourage hobbies, outdoor play, sports, and creative projects
10–14 years	2.5 hours/day	• Impaired reward circuitry • Poor self-control • Difficulty reading social cues • Withdrawal and low motivation	• Devices should be loaned, not owned • Screen time is a privilege, not a right • No devices in bedrooms or bathrooms Discuss entertainment vs productivity and healthy online behaviour • Support real-world friendships, skill-building, and active downtime
14–18 years	3 hours/day	• Social withdrawal & low self-esteem • Distorted reality perception • Poor social intelligence • Difficulty completing goals • Prioritising online relationships • Sleep & posture problems	• Discuss entertainment vs productivity and fantasy vs reality online • Teach how persuasive technology influences choices • Prioritise balance with extracurriculars, family routines, and community engagement • Encourage teens to build real-life confidence and independence

