

# Move Well Eat Well

## Ways to limit larger screen time

### What is screen time?

Watching screens and playing games using screens. For example:

- TV and DVDs
- playing computer, electronic or video style games
- smart phones and tablets.

### How much is too much?

National guidelines recommend:

- children under the age of 2 years should have no screen time
- children aged between 2-5 years should have no more than one hour of screen time each day.
- children aged between 5-12 years should spend no longer than two hours each day using screens for entertainment. This doesn't include homework.

### How are larger screens used?

Sometimes larger screen activities like television or DVDs and using computers or electronic or video games on can be used to distract children for periods of time.

Too much screen time is not healthy or good for children's development. There are plenty of other quiet activities that are better for children.

### Swaps for larger screens

Start by creating a list of fun activities to do instead of screen activities. You can do this with children. Try one in place of screens each week. This could include board games, card games, craft, balloon volley ball or walking the dog.

### For younger children:

- building blocks
- toys with lights, sounds and different textures
- picture books
- car tracks or train sets
- cardboard boxes, fabric and animal figurines for imaginary play
- small balls that have different feels or sounds e.g. spikey, soft or a bell inside

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## For older children:

- floor puzzles
- sticker, activity books, colouring in/mindfulness drawing books
- Lego
- balloons for hall or lounge games of balloon volleyball
- marble towers
- craft activities
- tasks to help cook dinner or around the house

## How to make screen time better

- Select programs or DVD's that get children up and active or dancing, are educational or encourage creative play.
- When children are watching screens they should have the option to be active if they want to be. Think about having some objects or toys nearby, for example:
  - soft balls and targets like cardboard boxes to roll them into
  - wedge mats to roll on (large cushions will do)
  - push or pull toys
  - card board boxes to make car parks or castles
  - balloons