



switch to play everyday

Why switch to play everyday?

Children need to be active throughout the day for good health. The time children spend watching television (TV), DVDs and using the computer could be better spent being physically active. Reducing screen-based activities and switching to play is important for children's healthy growth and development.



What are screen-based activities?

Screen-based activities include TV programs, videos, DVDs hand held games, video and computer games, as well as general computer time.

Switching to play every day will help children:

- Develop good health habits for life.
- Make friends and improve social skills.
- Enjoy fun creative play.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Have a good start to learning.



Did you know?

- Children request more soft drinks and snack foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt when they watch a lot of TV.
- Children model the behaviour of parents, siblings and friends who spend a lot of time using screen-based activities.
- Children who spend more than two hours each day in small screen-time are more likely to have poorer health and educational outcomes.

How much screen-time?

- For children 2–5 years of age, sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games) should be limited to less than one hour per day.¹
- Children younger than two years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games).¹

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How to switch to play everyday

- Encourage children, depending on their age, to help with household activities such as setting the table for meals, tidying their bedroom and packing away toys.
- Have dress ups, puzzles, crafts and building blocks ready for play at anytime during the day.*
- Encourage active and fun play (indoors and outdoors) such as dancing to music.
- Try different activities that the family can enjoy together especially on weekends.

* Small parts may be a choking hazard and are not suitable for children under 3 years of age



Tips to reduce screen-time

- Decide on family rules for screen-based activities—help everyone follow these rules.
- Plan the family's screen-time by setting goals for screen-based activities.
- Start off with small changes and gradually decrease the time spent on screen-based activities.
- Try one screen-free day per week.
- Set time limits on screen-based activities - use a timer or an alarm clock.
- Make bedrooms screen-free zones.
- Encourage family conversation during meal times by turning off the TV.
- Turn the TV on only for chosen programs or at specific times.
- Play music or audio books instead of having the TV on in the background.
- Be a good role model – set limits on your own screen-time.
- Talk to other parents about their ideas on how to switch to play.

Key messages

- Healthy habits start early in life.
- Children need to be active throughout the day and every day.
- Encourage and support free and creative fun play.
- Set limits on screen-time at home.
- Practise good family screen-time habits.
- Choose quality screen-based activities that are age appropriate, educational and that promote physical activity and creative play.



For more activity ideas please visit
www.kidsatplay.act.gov.au

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