

Ask the Pediatrician

Q. I’ve heard people talk about ‘screen time.’ What is it?

A. “Screen time” is the amount of time spent with television, video games, computers and cell phones. Studies show that many children spend more time in front of a screen each day than they do in school, being with family and friends and doing healthy things. It is important for parents to recognize that children are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of this exposure.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting TV exposure to no more than two hours of screen time each day, and discourages media use for children younger than 2.

Before the age of 2, children learn about the world and develop skills by exploring their environment and interacting with their caregivers. Despite claims that television and websites can be educational for little ones, media use at this age is more likely to do more harm than good. The best way to help babies and toddlers develop language is by talking to them. Play in its most basic forms helps develop creativity and problem-solving skills.

 If you have a question for the pediatrician, email youngandhealthy@cchmc.org

For older children, viewing is more than a passive process: Excessive media use is clearly associated with risky behaviors. As screen time increases, kids are more likely to be exposed to age-inappropriate themes involving violence, sexuality, drugs and alcohol. Seeing ads for junk food and being sedentary can contribute to obesity. Being in front of a TV or computer robs children of time that they could use socializing, being active and even sleeping.

Here are simple things we can do to protect children:

- Maintain age-appropriate limits on screen time.
- Keep TVs and computers out of bedrooms. Monitor and discuss what’s being watched.
- Be a good role model when it comes to using media.
- Talk to and read with your children.
- Go outside and play.



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Meet a future ‘cowboy hematologist’

Cameron Noe says he’s a country boy with a dream anyone would want to come true. He wants someday for every disease to have a cure. And he wants a part in it. He hopes to cure blood diseases someday, when he’s a “cowboy hematologist.”



Patients become fast friends at camp

Summer camp is one of Zion Coleman’s favorite times of the year. It’s when he gets to reconnect with friends who have sickle cell disease.

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