

Many families wrestle with the amount of time kids should spend in front of screens. Smart Families encourages families to **think beyond the quantity to consider the quality of screen use**. Review the recommendations below and prioritize your values to help guide how you utilize screens. These can be helpful for the whole family!

What type of content is being utilized?

- Is this educational or recreational? Active or passive?
- Is this age-appropriate? Is it geared towards kids, family, or adults?
- How will this content improve me or my life? Am I building a skill? Creating something?

Who is participating?

- Is this a family activity? Kids together? Solo time?
- Am I interacting with anyone? Do I know these people off-line?

Not how long -
how am I and
how is my child?

How am I or how is my child?

- How much time have I already spent on a screen today? Have I had any breaks?
- Am I using a screen to self-soothe or as a coping mechanism?
- How do I feel while using the screen? Am I happy, frustrated, sad, excited, etc.?
- How do I feel after using the screen? Am I happy, frustrated, sad, excited, etc.?

Does this support my family and our family values?

- How does this help me connect with my family, God, or other people I care about?
- What other activities have we already done or could we do instead?
- What skills and habits is this screen time building?

Recommendations for parents:

- Preview programs, games, and apps beforehand
- Supervise and ideally co-view when your child is engaging with screens
- Have conversations with your child about what you see, hear, and feel while using screens and after
- Balance screen time with other activities
- Turn off screens at night and keep screens out of bedrooms
- Talk to your kids about how to build a healthy brain

Warning Signs

- Sleep problems
- Lower grades in school
- Not enough outdoor or physical activity
- Weight problems
- Mood problems, especially tantrums or mood swings when separating from screens
- Vision problems
- Poor posture
- Developmental delays such as language or social skills