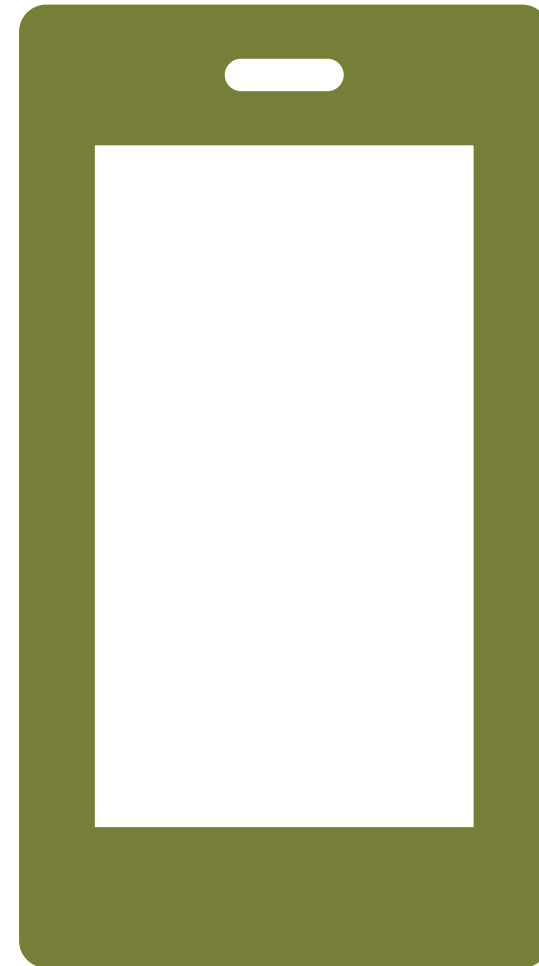


Introduction

- Screen time constitutes TV, computers, tablets, smartphones, video games, etc.
- The prevalence of screen time among children today.



Nearly all children in Canada are exposed to screens by the age of 2 and only 15% of Canadian children aged 3 to 4 years meet screen time guidelines of <1 h/day. Even before COVID, the average parent-reported screen time for this age group was 1.9 h/day.

TVs, tablets, and video portals like YouTube dominate total screen time for this age group. A 2018 Alberta study showed children at 2, 3, and 5 years old watching about 17, 25, and 11 h of TV per week respectively (or about 2.4, 3.6, and 1.6 h per day). Many preschoolers use screens at home *and* in childcare.

In the United States, most 2-year-olds use a digital device daily, and 9 of every 10 children are introduced to a device before their first birthday. One recent study reported a 60% rate of touchscreen device use in children younger than 3.

A 2020 U.S. survey found that nearly 4 in 10 parents (39%) say the television is either “always” on (10%), or on “most of the time” (29%). In those households, young children also consistently watch far more TV than other children their age.

Screen Time Guidelines



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

For children under 18 months: The AAP suggests avoiding the use of screens, except for video chatting. It's important to prioritize face-to-face interactions.

For children aged 18 to 24 months: If you choose to introduce digital media, it should be high-quality content, and you should watch it together with the child to help them understand what they're seeing.

For children aged 2 to 5 years: Limit screen time to one hour per day of high-quality programming. Co-viewing and discussing the content with them is encouraged.

For children aged 6 years and older: Establish consistent limits on the amount of time spent on screens and ensure that screen time doesn't interfere with adequate sleep, physical activity, and other healthy behaviors.

Positive Aspects of Screen Time

Screen time isn't
inherently negative.

Educational and
recreational benefits
of technology for
children.

Negative Effects of Excessive Screen Time



Physical health concerns
(sedentary lifestyle, obesity).



Sleep disturbances.



Impacts on mental health and
well-being.



Mental Health Impact

➤ **Increased risk of anxiety and depression.**

Excessive screen time can expose children to negative online content, cyberbullying, and unrealistic portrayals of life on social media. This exposure can contribute to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

➤ **Social isolation and its emotional toll.**

Spending too much time on screens can lead to social isolation, as it often replaces face-to-face interactions. This lack of social engagement can contribute to feelings of loneliness and a decline in social skills.

➤ **Cyberbullying and online harassment.**

Screen Time and Behavioral Issues



➤ **Aggression and impulsive behavior.**

Excessive screen time can lead to a decline in face-to-face social interactions. Children who spend a significant amount of time on screens may have fewer opportunities to develop and practice essential social skills, leading to difficulties in interpersonal relationships and communication.

➤ **Reduced attention span and academic performance.**

Excessive screen time, particularly with frequent content switching, can contribute to a shorter attention span. This may lead to difficulty in focusing on tasks, following instructions, and completing assignments, all of which can result in behavioral challenges.



Impulse control

Impulse control in children refers to their ability to manage and regulate their immediate urges, desires, or reactions.

Children with strong impulse control can:

- **Delay Gratification:** They can resist the temptation of immediate rewards or pleasures in favor of longer-term goals or greater benefits. For example, they can wait to eat dessert until after dinner rather than demanding it immediately.
- **Think Before Acting:** They take a moment to consider the consequences of their actions, make rational decisions, and avoid impulsive, potentially risky behaviors.
- **Manage Emotions:** They can regulate their emotional reactions, preventing impulsive outbursts of anger, frustration, or aggression.
- **Focus and Stay on Task:** They can concentrate on tasks and follow instructions without being easily distracted by unrelated stimuli or desires.



Screen Time and Sleep



Effects of blue light on melatonin production.



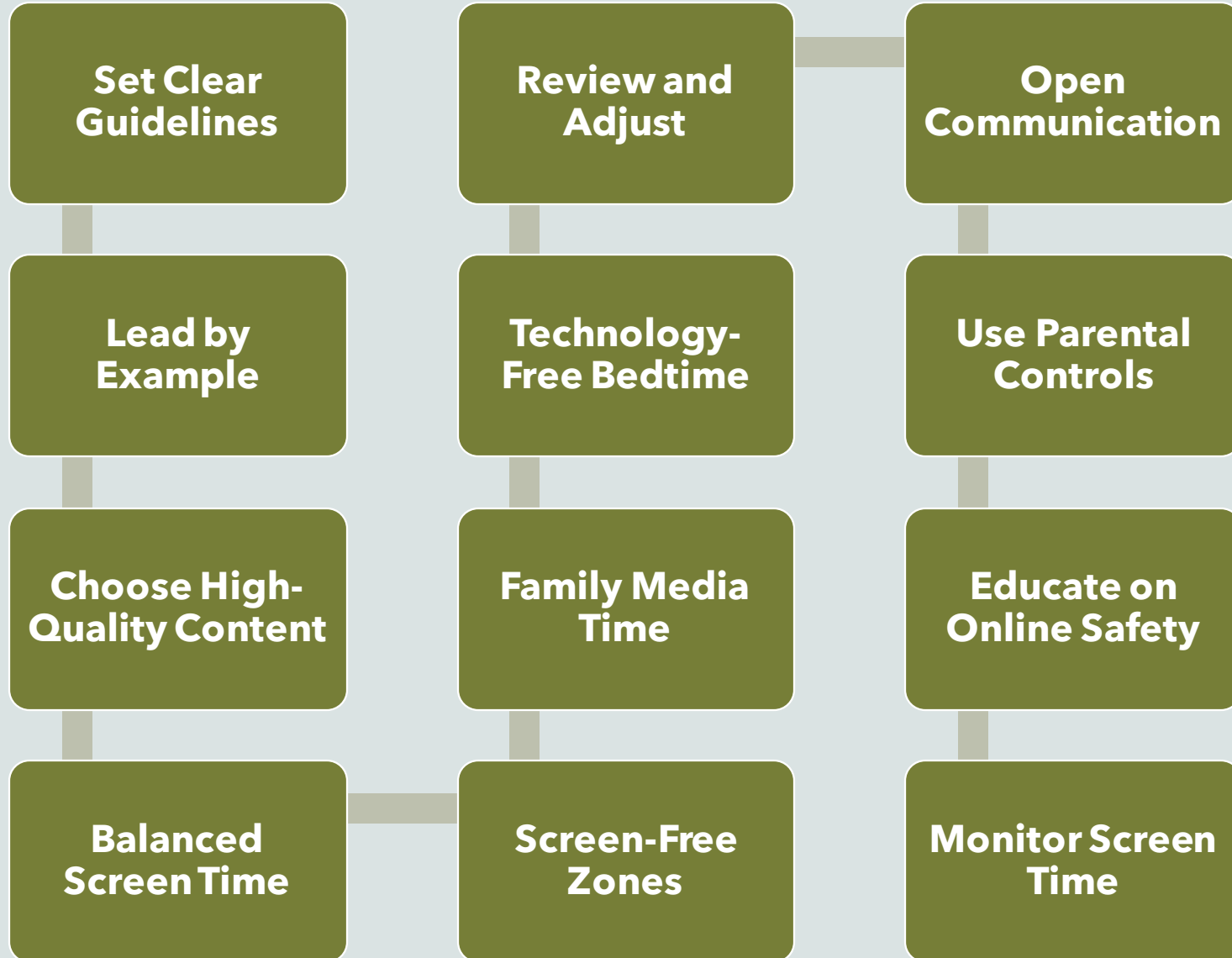
Establishing good sleep hygiene.



Setting Healthy Screen Time Limits

- Creating a family media plan.
- Encouraging outdoor and physical activities.

Creating a family media plan



Balancing Screen Time with Real Life



Encourage face-to-face interactions.



Alternative activities and hobbies.

Case Studies



Screen Time and Special Populations



The impact of screen time on children with special needs or pre-existing mental health conditions

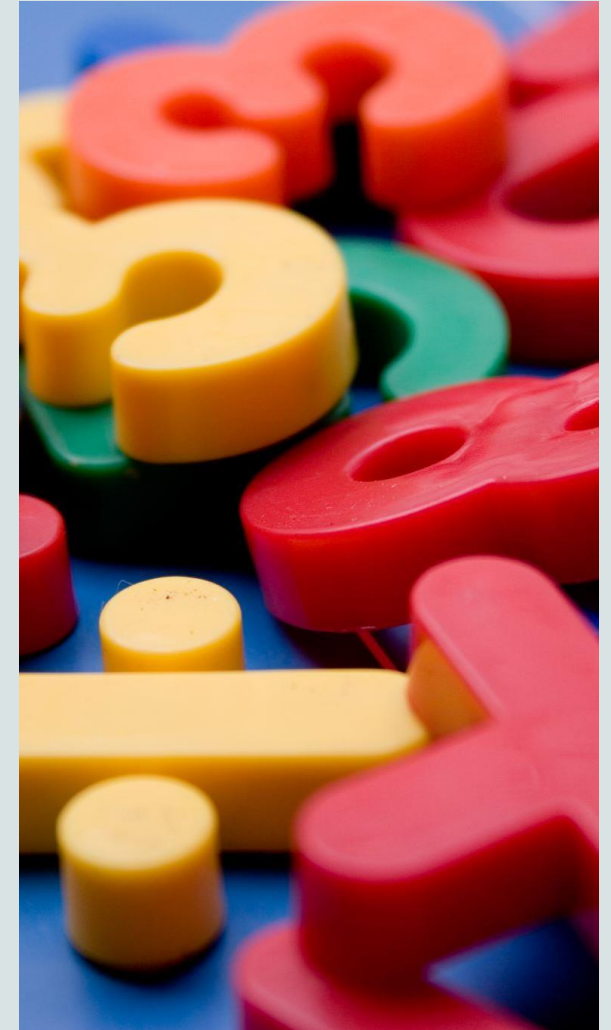
Technology and Positive Mental Health Resources

- **Smiling Mind:** This app offers mindfulness and meditation exercises designed for various age groups, including children and adolescents. It helps reduce stress and build emotional resilience.
- **Calm Kids:** Calm Kids is an app that provides guided relaxation and stress-reduction exercises for children. It aims to teach them to manage anxiety and stress.
- **MoodGYM:** Although primarily for adolescents, MoodGYM offers online cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) programs that can help teenagers deal with issues like depression and anxiety.
- **SuperBetter:** Designed to help children and teens build resilience and cope with challenges, SuperBetter incorporates gamification elements into mental health activities.
- **Stop, Breathe & Think Kids:** This app provides mindfulness and emotional regulation exercises tailored to children's needs. It encourages self-awareness and emotional well-being.



For Parents and Caregivers:

- **Child Mind Institute:** The Child Mind Institute offers a wealth of resources for parents and caregivers, including articles, videos, and guides on children's mental health topics.
- **Zero to Three:** This organization provides resources and information on early childhood development and emotional well-being for parents of young children.
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** NIMH offers valuable information on child and adolescent mental health, including articles, publications, and research findings.
- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP):** The AACAP website provides resources for parents and caregivers, including fact sheets and guides on various mental health topics.
- **HealthyChildren.org:** Developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, this website offers reliable information on children's physical and mental health.
- **Parenting for Brain:** This website provides evidence-based parenting tips and resources to support children's emotional and cognitive development.



Conclusion



Thank You

