

LEARNING
READINESS



Manage Screen Time

Screen time involves watching television, playing video games, and using computers. Television is a wonderful teacher, but sometimes what it teaches isn't good for children. Research has found that watching several hours of TV each day reduces children's reading skills by addicting them to fast-paced, emotionally-charged images rather than creating images in their minds based on words they're reading. Other research studies have found that young children's brains are actually changed by watching several hours of TV, including top-rated children's programming.

It's been found that every hour of TV watched each day increases by nine percent the bullying potential of a child. So the average of 3.5 hours of television that children watch each day increases their bullying potential by 30 percent!

In many households, there's barely enough time to do homework, and that's done just before bed. A California survey indicated that the more TV children watch, they less time

they want to spend in school. So an evening filled with "fun" makes the prospect of sitting in school more difficult to face. So, a "school night" filled with the "fun" of playing video or computer games, makes the prospect of sitting in school more difficult to face and reduces learning readiness.



Ways to practice this habit together:

- **Choose the programs that you and your child agree are good for him to watch alone and/or to watch together.** Then mark those days and times on a chart, ensuring that he has time for family fun, chores, free play, exercise/sports, eating, sleeping, schoolwork, and reading also on his schedule before fitting in "screen time." In this way, your child learns the habit of filling his life with activities beyond the world of a screen.
- **Make a deal about how your child earns screen time, while setting a maximum limit.** It can be earned by doing extra chores, reading, or being helpful to parents or siblings, for example.
- **Watch what your child is watching, what sites she is surfing or video games she is playing so you will know whether they are appropriate and can discuss with her what she's seeing.** Talk about what's happening on the screens, which encourages her verbal skills and lets you know how much she understands.