



Setting Limits on the “Virtual” World

Favorite TV shows, movies, and video games can spark the imagination in children and adults alike. However, too much time spent focused on electronic media may impact your child’s development in some areas, including:

- **Social skills and relationships.** Children who spend a lot of time in the “virtual” world may struggle with in-person interactions or have difficulty handling conflict.
- **Health.** Too much screen time may contribute to insufficient exercise, weight gain, and poor sleep quality.
- **Decreased focus.** Constant multitasking may affect a child’s ability to concentrate.

Easy access to a variety of media has its upsides, too, particularly from an educational standpoint. It offers:

- **Greater access to knowledge.** It’s never been easier for a child to gain an in-depth understanding of topics they find fascinating. Technology also facilitates research for school projects and online learning.
- **Self-guided learning.** Online tutorials are a helpful way to expand a child’s skills or increase their enjoyment of a hobby.
- **A wider world.** Today’s technology makes it easier to stay in touch with distant family members or friends.



If you are trying to balance your child’s screen time with other activities, these tips may be helpful:

- **Aim for one hour of activity a day.** Outdoor play, household chores, or walking a pet are good ways to get your child moving.
- **Set boundaries.** A simple rule might be, “No video games until your homework is done.”
- **Use parental controls.** Many devices or apps offer parental controls that set time limits on use. These tools can also assist you with setting boundaries on what your child can access.
- **Encourage reading.** Reading both fiction and non-fiction is essential to developing critical thinking skills. The more your child reads, the better!
- **Seek help.** LifeMatters can provide suggestions on how to manage your child’s media consumption or address difficulties with making friends or maintaining focus. Call 24/7/365 for assistance with any parenting concern.