Move Well Eat Well

School children and screen time

All children need down time and screens are a tempting activity.

Children spend a lot of their school day sitting so it is important that sitting activities like screen time aren't the only activity children do after school and on weekends. Where possible swap screen time for other activities.

What is screen time?

Watching screens and playing games using screens. For example:

- TV and DVDs
- playing computer, electronic or video style games
- smart phones and tablets.

Why should screen time be limited?

Too much screen time means not enough time for children to be active. When children are not active enough they miss out on opportunities to:

- develop and strengthen important movement skills like running, catching and jumping
- mix with others and develop social skills like taking turns and making friends.

For school aged children too much screen time can:

- reduce short term memory and concentration and therefore impact negatively on academic performance
- reduce fitness levels
- have negative effects on social skills
- increase the risk of unhealthy eating habits and difficulty maintaining a healthy weight

How much is too much?

National guidelines recommend that each day: children aged between 5-12 years should spend **no longer than two hours using screens** for entertainment. This doesn't include homework.

What about screen activities that get children moving?

Wii Fit and other fitness related Apps are better for children than sitting still as they do encourage some movement. However, the intensity of physical activity from these types of screen activities is not the same as playing the actual game or sport. Moving screen activities have a place but should not replace actual physical activity. It is much better for children to play a real game or sport.

For more information about limiting screen time visit the website www.movewelleatwell.tas.gov.au/families

Tasmanian Government