

## SLEEP AND SCREEN TIME TIPS FOR PARENTS

[World Sleep Day](#) is on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and the theme is *Sleep is Essential for Health*. Getting enough sleep is important for the physical, mental, social, and overall well-being of children and teens. To get a good night sleep, children and teens need to create and stick to healthy sleep habits.

### What are Healthy Sleep and Screen Time Habits?

Healthy sleep habits include a set bedtime, a bedtime routine, and screen free bedrooms. Bedrooms should be cool, dark, quiet, and free of television and other screens. A routine where children and teens go to bed at the same time each night and wakeup at the same time each morning helps them get the rest that they need.

Avoiding screen time (television, phone, and tablet) at least one hour before bedtime plays an important role in creating healthy sleep habits. Having screens in a bedroom can make it harder for children and teens to fall asleep. Instead, they may want to stay up late to chat with friends or play video games. Blue light from screens can also make it harder to fall asleep.

To cut down the amount of screen time your child is using, it is important to learn how many hours of screen time per day is okay. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guideline suggests that:

- Children aged **3-4 years** should have no more than **1 hour** of screen time per day. They should not be seated for long periods of time.
- Children aged **5-17 years** should have no more than **2 hours** of screen time per day. They should spend limited time sitting.

### How to Cut Down on Screen Time Use

Taking a break from screens has many health benefits, like better sleep and eating habits, increased self-esteem, better focus at school or work, and more time to spend with family and friends. Turning off screens will give your children and teens time to focus on the things that they usually may not have time to do. It is important to stick to a plan when turning off your screens.

#### More Tips to Reduce Your Childs Screen Time:

- Manage screen use through plans, rules, and limits.
- Make and review a family media plan with content and time limits.
- Encourage your child or teen to use screen time meaningfully.
- Try to watch TV programs where you can learn something. Choose content that is age appropriate.
- Model healthy screen use for your children or teens.
- Review your own media habits, plan daily “screen-free” times, and turn off screens when not in use.

If you are worried about your child sleep or screen time habits, reach out to their healthcare provider. For more information on sleep, visit the health unit website at <https://www.wechu.org/school-health/mental-health/sleep>.