

Making the most of your child's device



Many children now have access to a one to one device, be it an iPad, tablet or laptop. You might have lots of questions about how to use it and how to be cyber safe. But what about making you're your child uses their technology in a way that is good for their physical health as well?

This generation of children have technology and devices all around them from such an early age, so it is important to teach them good practices for life long healthy use all Information and Communication Technologies.




Telethon Tips!

The Telethon Child Health Institute recommend the 20 / 20 / 20 rule for every 20 mins of screen time:

- 20 minutes of physical
- Looking in the distance for 20 metres
- 20 blinks

Another key tip is **“NO APPS IN LAPS”** and to minimise the use of the device in the hour prior to bed time, as the blue light can impact on quality of sleep.

Other simple ideas to ensure healthy computer use include:

SCREEN FREE	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PAIN ZONE
Make bedrooms a screen free zone – this will enhance cyber safety but also limit the amount of time they are likely to spend on it.	Encourage a minimum amount of physical activity prior to screen use – if you like technology consider using a fit bit, where they have to reach a certain amount of activity before they access their “screen”.	Use timing devices and set alarms to remind you to get up and move around rather than relying on pain or discomfort telling you to move.
		

Some key tips to healthy ICT use:

Break up computer use with *physical activities*

- Do you know the Department Of Health (Australian Government) recommend **60 min of daily physical activity and no more than 2 hours screen time** for children aged between 5 and 12 years?
- Limit sedentary behaviour at school and home – think about how much screen time the children get at home at school, whether it is the smart board, a tablet, phone, tv... and now there is a laptop to add to the mix. Decreasing the unnecessary screen time is a key to remaining more physically active
- Take a break from computer use with an active task every 30-60 minutes

Encourage *changes in posture*

- It is ok for kids to stand at a bench using a laptop, sitting down or laying on the floor. This variety in the body position stimulates the muscles and also assists in concentration.
- Fidgeting and moving whilst using a computer is ok – again it stops the body from being static and not moving

When sitting at a desk to use a computer, ensure *good postures*

- Feet should be touching the floor (if chair is too high get a footstool)
- It isn't essential to have a backrest
- Avoid armrests on chairs
- Desk height should be at around elbow height

When sitting at a desk to use a computer, ensure *good eye contact*

- Top of screen should be at eye height (separate keyboard might be helpful at home?)
- Position screen one arm lengths away and directly in front of the student
- Avoid glare from incoming windows

Typing skills

- Learn shortcuts on the keyboard
- Learn how to touch type
- Learn some cool tricks with features such as dictation and screen reader

Transporting the laptop

- Choose a low weight option where available
- Carry laptop in back pack using straps over both shoulders

Pain

- Teach your child to recognise when they feel discomfort to do something about it, like take a break and stretch rather than working through the pain.

Reference:

Straker, L, Johnson, P, Burgess-Limerick, R, Dennerlein, J (2010) *Evidence Based Guidelines for the wise use of computers by children: Physical Development Guidelines*. ERGONOMICS Vol 53. No 4

Department of Health, (2014) *Physical Activity Guidelines for children aged 5-12 years*.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/F01F92328EDADA5BCA257BF0001E720D/\\$File/brochure%20PA%20Guidelines_A5_5-12yrs.PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/F01F92328EDADA5BCA257BF0001E720D/$File/brochure%20PA%20Guidelines_A5_5-12yrs.PDF)