

Screen Time Exposure in Children



What is screen time exposure?

Advances in technology have transformed media and its role in the lives of infants and young children. Increasingly, children are exposed to media from a younger age and have longer screen time exposure.

Screen time is the time spent using devices with screens such as televisions, smartphones, tablets, computers, learning devices and even television switched on in the background.



Heavy screen time use in infants and young children is associated with the following:

Social	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced parent-child interaction• Displacement of positive activities such as outdoor activities, playing with other children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speech and language delay• Poorer learning outcomes
Physical Health	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obesity• Difficulty falling asleep• Poorer quality of sleep and shorter sleep duration• Myopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attention difficulties• Poor impulse control• Challenging behaviours (e.g. tantrums)

What are some recommendations on media usage?

The following recommendations are adopted from American Academy of Pediatrics and World Health Organisation.

- For children younger than 18 months: Avoid media use.
- For children aged 18 to 24 months: Video calls are acceptable. If parents want to introduce screen time, choose high-quality educational programmes and view them together with your child.
- For children 2 to 5 years old: Limit screen use to no more than 1 hour per day of high-quality programmes.
- Do not give children their own screen time devices.
- Children should not be watching programmes without adult supervision.
- Avoid screen time at mealtimes and at least 1.5 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid using screen time as the main way to calm your child down.

Young children learn best through hands-on exploration as well as social interaction, playing, and conversations with caregivers.

What are high-quality programmes?

High-quality programmes refer to media content that are educational for your child. Co-view media with your child to help him or her to understand and apply what he or she is watching. Use the time to interact with him or her as well.



How to encourage screen-free time?

- Set limits on screen time with your child and apply them consistently.
- Switch off the television set and other devices when not in use.
- Limit adults' screen time use in front of your child. Set a good example.
- Implement screen-free time and places at home.
- Remove screen devices from child's bedroom.
- Find alternative activities that promote face-to-face interaction. Some examples include:
 - Reading with your child
 - Playing age-appropriate games or toys
 - Singing and dancing to music, songs and nursery rhymes
 - Arts & craft activities
 - Cooking with your child
 - Going to the playground, park, library, etc.

Talk to your child's doctor if you would like more information or have questions.

Additional Resources on Media Usage

- **Creating a personalised family media plan**
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Ideas on alternative activities to reduce screen time**
<https://commercialfreechildhood.org/screen-free-even-school/>
- **Advice on suitability of media content**
<https://www.common sense media.org/>
<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
- **Kid-friendly version of YouTube**
<https://www.youtubekids.com/>

NUH Child Development Unit

NUH Child Development Unit is part of the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute at National University Hospital. The clinic provides multidisciplinary assessments, therapy and holistic management of children with developmental & behavioural disorders from birth to 7 years old.

About the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI)

The KTP-NUCMI is the paediatric arm of the National University Hospital and comprises the Departments of Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery and Neonatology. We provide comprehensive and specialised medical and surgical services for newborns, children and adolescents, and are the only public hospital in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes. Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, we have set up an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/nuhkids.

Getting to NUH Child Development Unit

NUH Child Development Unit @ Jurong Medical Centre

60 Jurong West Central 3, Level 2, Singapore 648346

Jurong Medical Centre (JMC) is located next to The Frontier Community Club and opposite Jurong Point Shopping Mall. The nearest MRT station is Boon Lay (East-West Line).

NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

2 Choa Chu Kang Loop, #03-01, Singapore 689687

We are located within Keat Hong Community Club and opposite Lot One Shoppers’ Mall. The nearest MRT station is Choa Chu Kang (North-South Line).

Contact Us

NUH Child Development Unit

Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)

Jurong Medical Centre Appointment Line: +65 6665 2530/2531

Keat Hong Community Club Appointment Line: +65 6769 4537/4637

Fax: +65 6665 0158 Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

24-hour Children’s Emergency

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1

General Enquiry: +65 6772 2555

KTP-NUCMI

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2 (Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)

Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)

General Enquiry: +65 6772 5736 Appointment Line: +65 6772 2002

Fax: +65 6776 2102 Email: ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

9a Viva-University Children’s Cancer Centre

Location: NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9

Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri) Appointment Line: +65 6772 5030

Fax: +65 6872 4314 Email: cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Children’s Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location: Junction 10, 1 Woodlands Road, #01-22, Singapore 677899

Operating Hours: 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)

General Enquiry: +65 6219 1538 Email: childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg

Website: www.nuh.com.sg/ucc

National University Hospital

Location: 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

Tel: +65 6779 5555 Email: NUH_enquiries@nuhs.edu.sg

Website: www.nuh.com.sg