

Newspaper Article on Screen Time

The Shuswap Early Childhood Development (ECD) Committee has been working together since 2003 to highlight the importance of the early childhood years. This year, our goal is to work on raising awareness about the overuse of "screen time" that comes from television, computers, and other hand held electronic devices.

A few Tips for Reducing Screen Time

Adapted from "Screen Smart" article by Lynne Reside; Regional Early Childhood Development Coordinator.

Increasingly, children are spending more time watching screens and less time in active physical play or interacting with their families and friends. Research has shown that young children are watching an average of 7.5 hours per day of different screens. We are seeing an increase in childhood obesity and diabetes and a decrease in physical fitness. Children are often exposed to inappropriate violence and questionable advertising to which they are particularly vulnerable.

We also know that almost one out of three children in BC enters kindergarten not ready to learn and vulnerable to poor outcomes in school and in life. Too much screen time affects children's oral language development. A poor vocabulary at age three is often a predictor of vulnerability at kindergarten entry, poor reading skills in Grade 3 and lack of high school completion. On the other hand, we live in a society where good skills with technology are an asset in the workplace.

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends no screen time at all for children under two, one hour per day for children two to six, and no more than two hours per day for older children.

Simple tips such as reading a book together or playing games as a family increases your physical activity, improves your children's language skills and reduces screen time.

Over the next few months, the Shuswap Early Childhood Development Committee will be spreading the word on Screen Free activities in the Shuswap. Remember "Unplug and Play."