

# FACT SHEET



## REDUCING YOUNG CHILDREN'S TELEVISION TIME

### How much time do your children spend watching TV and playing on the computer?

Time spent watching TV, surfing the internet or playing on the computer takes away from the time that children could spend being active. Australian guidelines recommend that school-aged children should not spend more than two hours a day watching 'small screens' such as televisions, playing on the internet or computer games. Screen time for preschoolers is best kept to a minimum.

The internet, computers and even television all have a role in children's education and learning. However, the health benefits, skills and enjoyment that your children can get from being active are just as important.



### What can parents do to help?

Next time, before you switch on the TV or the computer for your child, stop and think. Can they play on the computer or watch TV later in the evening or when it's not possible for them to be outside playing?

#### YOU COULD TRY:

- **Setting time limits for your child's TV watching** – if there is a specific program that your child wants to watch, turn the TV off once it is finished or record it and let your child watch it at a more suitable time;
- **Setting time limits for computer games and internet surfing** – No more than two hours and not during daylight hours when they could be outside being active;
- **Not allowing TV's or computers in your child's bedroom** – keep them in a common area of the house so that you can monitor use; or
- **Finding active indoor and outdoor alternatives** for your children at the times when they are more likely to watch TV or play on the computer.

### Did you know?

- Sedentary or 'still' time spent watching television/ DVD's, surfing the internet or playing on the computer is linked to becoming overweight or obese.
- Children who watch TV for more than two hours each day are more likely to have an unhealthy diet, less likely to eat fruit and less likely to participate in physical activity.
- 89% of four to five year olds spend more than two hours watching television, videos or DVD's each day.
- It is more likely that children will snack on foods that are high in sugar, salt or saturated fat when watching television.



For more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity go to [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)

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