

Family Support Worker Tips and Ideas – Week 4

Too much screen time?

It's often difficult to know when screens are being used 'too much'. While using screens is of course positive in many ways, we all know the impact screens can have on children such as affecting sleep, being addictive and inhibiting initiative. During lockdown there has been an increased use of Virtual Reality headsets in children. These also pose risks with reports of headaches, eye strain, dizziness and nausea after using the headsets. These symptoms are thought to be triggered by the Virtual Reality illusion, which makes the eyes focus on objects apparently in the distance that are actually on screen just a few centimetres away. Having said that, most children would happily use screens all day if they could, so how can parents deal with 'too much screen time'. Some things to think about that may help with implementing new screen time rules are:

Presenting a united front

Make sure all adults in the house work together to maintain the new rules. If the first adult is more lenient, it undermines the second adult. It also makes it more difficult to stick to the rules next time.

Calm time

When deciding on what the rules should be do this with your children at a calm, neutral time.

What, when, how, why, where

When the new rules have been agreed, talk these through with your child. Ask them questions such as 'when are you allowed on?', 'where are you allowed to take your device?', 'what do you need to do when I say time to come off?'. This means you can be sure they know exactly what the new rules are, but also means you can explain if there's anything they don't quite understand.

Making outside interesting

We've spent a lot of time inside recently but this doesn't mean children will always want to get outside. One idea for making outside interesting is introducing a scavenger hunt. Make a list of things your children need to try and find such as a brown leaf, a purple flower or an interesting object. For older children, introducing them to geocaching can be a fun activity to do with them.

Getting some sun

We need light on our skin. If you are stuck in the house try to sit near an open window. We need light to make vitamin D and sunlight also affects our mood, keeping us happier.

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If you'd like more information about these tips and ideas or if you have other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Maybe you'd like advice around things such as anxiety, raising self-esteem or sibling rivalry.

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