

Talking Points and Background Information on Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) convened the *Growing Up Digital: Media Research Symposium*, in May, 2015. The stakeholders focused upon children and adolescent's interaction with the rapidly evolving use of digital media, and how access and media use affects their physical, cognitive, social and emotional health. The AAP and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) both recommend that screen time should be limited, as there are studies linking childhood obesity, high blood pressure, vision safety, and the development of repetitive stress syndrome with increased use of digital technology.

Talking points

- The AAP recommends that the term screen time should be classified in terms of consumption, creation, and communication, and that the specific content and context of media use should also be considered. Educating students about digital citizenship can assist students to understand how they can stay healthy while living in an increasingly digital world.
- The AAP suggests that parents/guardians set limits for their children and the number of hours that they spend with digital media. They have published "[Children and Media: Tips for Parents](#)" which lists some simple tips for parents and guardians to consider in the digital age.
- Teachers and staff have received training to be aware of the ways in which they can assist students to develop healthy habits (or use "good health habits) with respect to digital media use.
- Teachers plan instruction to meet the specific needs of the students in their class using the resources that they have available. Teachers plan learning based on the needs of the students in the classroom. Technology is sometimes used as a support to reach these goals. Because students' progress through material at different rates, it is not in students' best interest to put a time limit on the supports that students use to learn content whether that support is a pencil, a textbook, or a technology tool.
- The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has required [technology standards](#) for students. The standards outline the content and skills that teachers in Virginia are expected to integrate into their classrooms so that students are proficient in technology use.
- FCPS carefully considers the instructional technology used with students and provides professional development to ensure that teaching pedagogy and instructional technology work together to provide a rich learning experience for each child.
- FCPS has a software approval process in place that ensures the tools are beneficial for learning and are in compliance with federal laws such as FERPA. By regulation, all software that is used must go through both an instructional and a technology review. The instructional review looks at the validity of the content as well how appropriate the tool is for the grade level.
- As we look to the future, much of the information that students need to learn will be online. We need to help students develop skills so they can be successful in this type of environment.
- FCPS promotes the 9-5-2-1-0 Zip Code for Your Health: 9 hours of sleep, 5 fruits and vegetables, no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time, 1 hour of physical activity, and 0 sugary drinks.

Background Information From Science and Medical Resources

Childhood Obesity:

- As part of a study conducted by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), and the National Youth Fitness Survey (NNYFS), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics identified that sedentary behaviors associated with increased digital time has a direct correlation with the increase in children's weight.
- Studies have shown that children who eat meals during media and digital exposure may not be able to interpret internal cues of fullness. They may eat larger portions and choose less healthy options resulting in an increase in body mass index.
- Media free zones during meal times should be encouraged.

Sleep impact:

- Use of digital media can negatively impact sleep due to the disruption of melatonin secretion resulting from blue light emitted from e-readers and digital tablets.
- Sleep onset is delayed or shortened, resulting in the inability to achieve deep, restful sleep.
- Sleep deprivation is strongly associated with obesity and poor academic performance.
- The AAP media policy recommends to avoid technology at bedtime and throughout the night.
- As with media free zones during meal times, media free zones should also be encouraged at bedtime.

Eye strain:

- Digital eye strain is the physical discomfort felt after prolonged exposure to digital screens. Students who work and study on laptops are at high risk for digital eye strain.
- Children experience eye stress with computer use and should be encouraged to blink often and take frequent breaks.
- Consider the '20-20-20 Rule': every 20 minutes have students look away from their computers to an object at least 20 ft. away for 20 seconds.
- Changes in the shape of the eyeball leading to nearsightedness from increased computer use has been documented in studies.

Repetitive Stress Injury:

- Affects bones, muscles, tendons and nerves, and develops when a minute injury occurs repeatedly from over or misappropriate use of a body part.
- The National Academy of Sciences has documented an increase with repetitive stress injuries (RSI) related to computer use.
- Encourage ten-minute breaks every hour that students spend on the computer.
- Encourage students to shake out their wrists every ten minutes.