

## HELPSHEET 3 MANAGING SCREEN TIME PHONES/TABLETS/TELEVISIONS



Technology is part of the everyday life of your child. This technology includes iPhones, tablets, computers and televisions [digital devices]. If you are a parent who is concerned about the amount of time your child spends in front of a screen, you are not alone. In 2020 the Early Years Alliance found that 78% of parents of three- and four-year-olds said that they found it difficult to control their child's screen time.

As the child gets older, parental concern turns more to online safety with almost half of parents worried about on line content that encourages children to harm themselves. On the other hand parents recognise the value of digital devices believing that these devices had helped in their child's learning in some way.

Some of the research around the use of technology in early years has found that where children are left unsupervised for limitless time in front of

a TV or tablet/iPhone, attention span and ability to concentrate and focus are reduced. Sleep is effected because the blue light emitted by digital devices can interfere with the natural production of melatonin, a hormone that helps us to sleep.

However, there are many benefits to be gained when using screen based technology. It is about finding a happy and comfortable balance.

Here are a few tips to help you:

**Consider setting some Family Rules or Ground rules** for the whole family about using digital devices e.g not during meal times; not after 6pm [or within an hour of bedtime]; taking turns if there is only one device per family.

If you would like more help or support with this please contact

[familysupport@toftwoodfederation.co.uk](mailto:familysupport@toftwoodfederation.co.uk)

Further information available at [Sleep Foundation website](#) or [Just One Norfolk](#)

**Develop a bedtime routine** doesn't involve having the TV on or using a device. Set consistent "screens off" and "lights out" times: Your child may well push against this when you are trying to implement a change but is you remain consistent and firm, they will soon adapt.

It is never too early to encourage your child to learn **relaxation techniques** like deep breathing whilst laying quietly on the bed can help your child to calm their mind.

Does your child understand **on line safety** and what it means? Be prepared to ask them and consider use of parental controls.

**Set a good example** - make sure your child always knows you prefer talking to them than being on your own devices.

**If your child loves a certain type of game** look for something in the 'real world' that is similar. So for example

if they like football games take them to see local teams play at the park. Get them active joining a team.

