



CVSE Screen Time Recommendations

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Television and Screen Time

1.0 Introduction

Screen time in its many forms is now embedded in our culture and taken for granted to such a degree that it is often difficult for us to question its value and effect upon children. However, it is widely held amongst those involved in Steiner education, that being exposed to age-inappropriate amounts of screen time, including watching TV, DVDs and streaming and playing computer games (such as on smart phones and tablets) is detrimental to the healthy development of the child. More and more research is emerging which clearly indicates the damaging effects of screen time on all aspects of human development. The addictive nature of computer games is now recognized by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The following outlines our rationale.

2.0 The purpose of this document

This document is not a policy but is set out to make recommendations around the use of electronic devices; the purpose of this document is to voice Calder Valley Steiner Education's advice and guidance around the use of such devices by any child attending one of our settings.

3.0 Objectives

- To make recommendations around the use of screen time
- Give rationale for recommendations
- Offer support to new and existing parents

4.0 Rationale for Recommendations

- All children have an innate imaginative capacity and their natural state is to be active in this. This is one of the great gifts of childhood and crucial for their healthy journey into adulthood, when children acquire other faculties. As they do so, it is a capacity, which is usually lost or transformed, never to be re-lived in the same way. TV, DVDs, streaming and/or computer games etc. make children unhealthily 'still' and stifle their own imaginations. By presenting the child with 'finished' images, the child is required to do little or no inner work (or active play) at all and their imagination is 'disabled' whilst watching. Afterwards, this can result in listlessness, lack of initiative and boredom; children may need to be constantly entertained. Alternatively, it may result in children being over-

stimulated to such an extent that they can no longer listen properly to real people - they switch on or off as they please. It is felt that this kind of stimulation is in fact *deprivation* for the child's own abundant creative abilities.

- Through our education, we encourage children's natural capacity to be highly sensitive to their environment and the people around them. They are, therefore, deeply susceptible to being mesmerised; they cannot filter their absorption of the things they see and hear. We are careful in both the kindergarten and Parent and Child groups to present material in a way appropriate to their age and sensibilities.
- When your child draws a hero or princess, do you want them to draw an image given to them by Disney, or to conjure their own from their imagination? By contrast, the quality of children's material on TV, DVDs and computers is such that they exert a very powerful effect upon children's imagination. They force images and noises of all kinds upon the child which are in our view inappropriate – the children may become desensitised as their threshold for violence, noise, aesthetics, moral and social behaviours lowers. Young children do not have the discrimination to regulate their own watching. They are not yet able to know what is good for them and what is not and they depend on the adults around them to decide the boundaries, which will protect them (in all areas of life, not just this one) until they can freely take care of themselves.
- The images that flash past on the screen are not connected to real life – they are an artificial representation of life and, as such, abstract. One cannot *relate to a screen*. By minimising children's exposure to screen-based media we enhance their capacity for original thinking, imagination and resilience, which they will surely need in our fast-changing world. Children live vividly in the present and to be healthy they need to feel deeply connected to the world around them. They do not have the intellectual sophistication to cope healthily with this abstract phenomenon. TV et al literally *undo* the work we do at our Settings.

5.0 Recommendations

Kindergarten

- Ideally no screen entertainment (including computer games)
- Ideally do not use screen time on play dates.
- However, if your child is going to watch then:
 - i. try not to use during the school week. Certainly, no screen time prior to coming to Kindergarten in the morning;
 - ii. if possible, watch with your child, or preselect what they are watching particularly with tablets, or other portable screen-based media;

- iii. watch good quality, wholesome programs, which you have pre-selected;
- iv. watch DVD's, or preloaded episodes to avoid exposure to adverts.
- No screens in bedrooms; watch in communal areas only.

Please also share these guidelines with Grandparents and others who care for your children.

NB Please do not bring electronic devices into Kindergarten.

6.0 Monitoring effectiveness

- This document is to support parents in making their own decisions and therefore is not enforceable.
- If any parents have a problem/issue with screen time at home the teaching staff and trustees are available for advice and support.
- This document will be reviewed annually
- This document will be discussed and reviewed at EY Teachers' Meetings

7.0 Recommended reading:

- *Managing Screen Time. Raising Balanced Children in the Digital Age*, by Edmund Schoorel, Floris Books, 2016
- *The Children of Cyclops. The Influences of Television Viewing on the Developing Human Brain*, by Keith A. Buzzell, Floris Books, 2017
- Gaming addiction classified as disorder by WHO, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42541404>
- *The Genius of Play. Celebrating the Spirit of Childhood*, by Sally Jenkinson, Hawthorn Press