

Child Screen Time in Texas

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

TEXAS CHILDREN SPEND EXTENDED TIME ON SCREENS

Screen time includes time spent watching television, playing video games, or using an electronic device with a screen such as a smartphone or tablet.¹ Time spent watching screens is often sedentary, including sitting, reclining, and lying down and can replace physical activity.¹

Prolonged Recreational Screen Time

Texas children spend significant time using screens.



90% of Texas school-aged children and adolescents spend 2 or more hours/day on screens outside of school time or schoolwork.



Time spent on screens by Texas children and adolescents varies by sex.

- **11%** of girls and **11%** of boys spend <2 hours/day.
- **34%** of girls and **36%** of boys spend 2-4 hours/day
- **56%** of girls and **53%** of boys spend >4 hours/day



80% of Texas children and adolescents have electronic devices (TV, laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.) in the room where they sleep.



Having electronic devices in the room where children sleep increases by grade level.

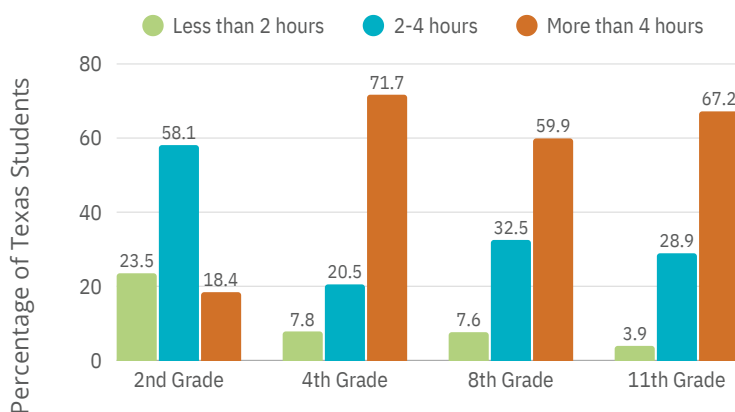
- **58%** in grade 2
- **79%** in grade 4
- **90%** in grade 8
- **91%** in grade 11

Why Children Should Limit Their Screen Time

Sedentary behaviors, including screen time duration and frequency, have negative health impacts on children and adolescents, including:^{2,3}

- Lower physical fitness
- Increased risk of overweight and obesity
- Poor cardiometabolic health
- Poor mental health
- Shorter sleep duration

Total recreational screen time hours/day*



*Total recreational screen time includes television, computer, tablet, smartphone, and videogames outside of school time and schoolwork.

How to address Texas children's screen time use and sedentary behavior

Parents can develop **personalized media use plans** for their children based on the child's age, health, personality, and developmental age.^{1, 4}

- Limit TV and electronic device use during meals, snack times, and in bedrooms.
- Have children engage in activities that promote health and well-being, such as team sports or outdoor play.
- Break up extended sitting time every 30-60 minutes.
- Avoid screen-based homework within an hour of bedtime.

School-related screen time should be meaningful, mentally and physically active, and should enhance learning.¹

- Limit time on devices and take a "brain break" every 30 minutes.
- Discourage media-multitasking in the classroom and while doing homework.
- Involve various movements or activities in homework and limit sedentary homework.

Current Screen Time Guidelines

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** recommendations change based on a child's age:⁴

- Children (less than 2 years)
 - Media use should be **very limited** and only when an adult is standing by to co-view, talk, and teach (for example, video chatting with family alongside parents).
- Children (2-5 years of age)
 - Limit screen use to **no more than 1 hour per day**.
- Children (5 years and older)
 - Make sure media use is not displacing other important activities, such as sleep, family time, and exercise.
- Tweens and teens (9-18 years of age)
 - Parents should engage tweens and teens in conversations about their media use, digital citizenship, what they've seen or read, who they are communicating with, and what they have learned from their media use.

References

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About: Texas Child Health Status Report

These reports utilize state-level data from the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (Texas SPAN) Project 2021-2023 to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth

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