



Prescriptions for PREVENTION

Guidance from the Western States
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit



Screen Time



Did you know?

Light from electronic devices can negatively affect children's sleep patterns and vision development. Children love to play on phones and tablets, but the blue light interferes with melatonin production, delaying sleep and quality. Restorative sleep is critical for children's and teenagers' physical and mental development. Chronic sleep deprivation may appear as academic performance decline rather than sleepiness in this age group. Excessive screen time can also promote near-sightedness in children and teenagers.



Do

- Limit bright lights in the bedroom. Dim red or amber night lights are best for children afraid of the dark.
- To promote near and far vision development, encourage a combination of indoor and outdoor playtime if air quality is good.
- Get your child's vision checked annually.
- Ensure your child has adequate and scheduled time for sleep. Learn more about the importance of [sleep](#) for development and recommended hours of rest for children [here](#).



Don't

- Avoid letting your child use screens two hours before bedtime. Encourage quieter activities, such as reading and analog toys, leading up to bedtime.
- Don't let your children have unregulated screen time. Switching from a tablet to a television won't help ocular development.
- Don't shift bedtimes. Keep the time for bed the same on weekdays and weekends to promote a healthy circadian rhythm.
- Don't rely on the weekend for your child to catch up on lost sleep. While this can help in the short term, it still places your child at risk for mood disorders and poor cognitive performance. Learn more about the risks of poor sleep [here](#).



For more information, scan the code or visit

<https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/curriculum-tools/prescriptions-for-prevention/>

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