

# Screen swap! Turn it off!

## TRY THESE GOALS:

1. Swap 30 minutes of screen time (TV, computer, electronic devices) for something active each day
2. Aim for no more than 2 hours of screen time a day (TV, computer, electronic devices), excluding homework

Watching too much TV or playing computer games means you may be spending a lot of time sitting and being INACTIVE, and if you are sitting for too long, you tend to snack more. We also know that watching too much TV can interrupt your SLEEPING patterns, which can make it hard to concentrate at school.

## SCREEN SWAP IDEAS

Next time you are bored, or find yourself wondering what to do with your free time, don't just go straight for the TV, computer or iPad! Do something more interesting with your free time. Check out all the ideas below. Try a new activity that you haven't done before. Get your friends and family to join you and ditch the screen together!

- Go to the park with your family
- Play a board game
- Join an after school club
- Play with friends
- Skip, hop, jump around the backyard
- Dance to your favourite songs
- Fly a kite on a windy day
- Play in the backyard - do you have a trampoline?
- Shoot some hoops
- Play charades
- Build a fort or cubby house
- Learn / play an instrument
- Karaoke cleaning (tidying up while singing)
- Have a musical sing-alongs with your friends
- Play musical chairs with all the family
- Play dress ups, which character will you be today?
- Set up an arts and crafts table and get creative
- Invent a new game, make it active and exciting
- Cook your favourite meal or help your parents / carer cook dinner
- Play a card game around the table, be creative and add some jumping and hopping to your game



# BOREDOM BUSTERS!



Need more screen swap ideas? Here's a great way to beat the boredom on rainy days inside. Instead of reaching for the remote or going online, make your own boredom busters box! Then next time it'll be ready when you need it.

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR BOREDOM BUSTERS BOX:

1. Get a big empty box and fill it up with all the games and fun stuff you can find. Card games (Uno, Solitaire, Snap), board games (Pictionary, Cranium), puzzles, balls, arts and crafts equipment.
2. Next, write down your own ideas on bits of paper or card – such as hide and seek, make your own comic or magazine, invent and star in your own play/radio show, musical chairs etc.
3. Put these ideas into the boredom busters box too and mix it up.

## HOW TO USE THE BOREDOM BUSTERS BOX:

When you're feeling bored, just go to your boredom box and you'll have loads of good ideas to choose from. To make it more fun, close your eyes and pick something at random and make sure you play/do that for at least one hour. Or, get a parent/carer or brother or sister to pick something for you. Get boredom busting!

# HEY KIDS! DID YOU KNOW....

- Eating in front of the TV or computer screen distracts your brain without your realising so, you might not feel as full and, you could end up eating more. Switch off the screen at mealtime and really enjoy your food!
- Watching ads for foods and drinks like chocolate, soft drinks and fast food can make you want them more (Quick! Turn off that TV before you get brainwashed).
- It's easy to get into the habit of eating junk in front of the TV. So THAT'S why some of us can't resist a screen snack. Step away from the screen and get busy with other activities instead.
- Having a TV in your bedroom and watching it before bedtime can make it harder to sleep.  
How are you going to get up in time for a delicious friendly breakfast and be an activity superstar if you're too tired?



## GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

- The Department of Health recommend that to reduce health risks, children aged 5 – 12 years should minimise the time they spend being sedentary every day,
- Limit the use of electronic media for entertainment (e.g. television, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day and,
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.



**Parents...Standby for action! Check out these top tips for helping your whole family cut down their screen time.**

### 1. SET SMART GOALS AND REWARDS

Work with your child to gradually reduce TV, computer and electronic games to no more than two hours a day (except for homework), on at least five days a week. Agree on a reward, but not TV or computer time as this will be confusing for your child. When they're working on this goal, don't forget to PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE!

### 2. LEAVE THE SCREEN AS A FAMILY

Be a good role model! If you're always stuck to the screen, how will you child learn not to be? Establish boundaries for the whole family to follow. Make reducing screen time fun for the family, get competitive and see who can come up with the most screen swap ideas.

## 3. HELP YOUR CHILD REACH THEIR GOAL

Before you start, add up your family's screen time hours to see when you rely on the screen most. Next, put a plan into action and make rules and routines (e.g. no TV at mealtimes) for healthy habits in the home. Set realistic screen time limits with your child and be consistent sticking to these. Consider things that could make reducing screen time tough for your child such as having a TV in their bedroom (this can also affect sleep) or not having screen swaps planned.

## 4. SUPER SCREEN SWAPS

The best screen swaps are the active ones, but this isn't realistic all the time. Home activities like reading and playing board game as a family are great swaps too and, they'll remove unhealthy triggers such as junk food ads and the habit of eating junk food in front of the TV. Remember, your child doesn't have to give up their favourite program or computer game. Simply plan ahead together so they don't exceed their two hour limit, and help them find alternative activities they enjoy too.

### Useful Links

- [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-active-evidence.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-active-evidence.htm)
- [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/MMFSReductvtime\\_Dec11WEB.pdf](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/MMFSReductvtime_Dec11WEB.pdf)
- [www.parentsjury.org.au/key-concerns/physical-activity/recreational-screen-time](http://www.parentsjury.org.au/key-concerns/physical-activity/recreational-screen-time)
- [www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/screen\\_time.html](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/screen_time.html)