

Children need **Less screen time. More green time.** But what to do in COVID times?

Why increased screen time is not good for children

- Increases the risk of Myopia and Myopia progression
Myopia (Nearsightedness) is a common eye condition where you see near objects well, but far-off ones are blurred.
- Causes stress, anxiety, loss of social skills and other behavioural issues
- Disturbs regular sleep pattern



Best practices for safe online learning for children

- Duration of online classes must be age-appropriate

Less than 3 years



No educational calls

4 - 6 years



Less than 90 minutes,
with one break

7 - 12 years



180 - 240 minutes,
with 2 to 3 breaks

12 – 16 years



6 - 8 hours per day,
with 5 to 6 breaks
including a long
lunch break

- After every 45 minutes, children must be allowed to take a break
- Minimum one session per day of physical training, e.g. yoga, dance, etc.
- Avoid digital modes of homework

How parents and teachers can help

- Make sure children follow the 20-20-20 rule and blink their eyes frequently

Take a
20
Second break

Every
20
Minutes

Look at something
20
Feet away

- Encourage them to maintain good posture (back straight)
- Encourage physical activities and movement in between classes
- Preferably, ask them to connect to bigger screens like a TV, laptop, desktop, etc.
- The screen should be kept at least 18 - 24 inches away from the child (slightly lower than or at eye level)
- Use screen protectors/matte films to reduce reflections and adjust screen brightness
- Don't let them watch the screen in dim light/very bright light (direct sunshine)
- Don't let them sit directly in front of an AC/fan; this causes their eyes to dry up
- Ensure that their necks don't bend excessively
- Children who use spectacles should wear them regularly



At home, screen-free zones and times should be identified - dinner table, bedtime, etc. Children follow what parents do and hence parents should follow self-abstinence. Lubricating eye drops can be used in cases of prolonged screen usage.