

Solutions to reducing your kids' screen time and keeping them active

By Brian Lockhart

If you speak to someone in the electronics industry you will find out that sales of video games, smart phones and other electronic devices have gone through the roof during this current pandemic.

With so many people staying at home and sports activities cancelled, everyone is looking for a way to fill idle time.

That includes a lot of kids who have traded ice time for screen time.

There's no doubt that physical activity is important to maintaining good health.

It's very easy to get into a routine that includes playing a game on a screen rather than going out and actually taking part in an activity.

Experts agree that not all time spent looking at a video screen is bad. You can learn a lot by going on-line. However, there must be a balance between watching something on a screen and actually getting out there and doing it.

So, the experts have come up with a few solutions to help get your kids to maintain an active lifestyle.

First of all, be a role model.

You can nag or try to reason with kids to get them off of devices, laptops and television, but the reality is that while your kids may not always listen to what you say, they are always watching what you do.

So keep track of your own screen time ? the kids will notice.

Secondly, try to resist the urge to take devices away as a punishment, or give them as a reward.

Present screen time as something to enjoy in moderation.

Try sticking to a schedule.

You can ask kids questions like, "what do you like to do best on your devices?" or "are there certain times a day you like to watch movies or play games?"

You can block off certain times during the day when screen time is not permitted. It teaches kids to be more mindful of their on-screen choices.

When it comes to physical activity, it's a lot more fun when you're doing something you love. You may like to jog a few miles, but your child may hate it.

By encouraging something they like to do, whether it's riding a bike, skateboarding, swimming, or playing a round of golf, they are much more likely to participate in that activity.

Finally, join in the fun.

Toss your own phone aside. Kids aren't the only ones addicted to their phones and screen time.

Playing a sport or being part of an activity with your child will give you some exercise as well as creating a lifelong memory.