

## Screen Time Policy and Procedures

<b>Policy Number</b>	2009/14
<b>Approved by</b>	Heritage Management Committee – 8 December 2009; 14 May 2013; 13 August 2019
<b>Last reviewed</b>	December 2009; May 2013; August 2019
<b>Next review due</b>	2022
<b>National Law and Regulations</b>	National Law Section 167, Regulation 168(2)(h)
<b>National Quality Standard</b>	Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety. Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
<b>EYLF</b>	Learning Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

### Policy Statement

The Office of the Children’s e-safety Commissioner defines screen time as ‘the amount of time spent watching a screen or electronic media for entertainment’. This includes watching TV, playing electronic games or texting. It does not include time spent on educational activities such as school work.<sup>1</sup>

Heritage Early Childhood Centre (Heritage) recognises that screen technology and passive screen-time has become an inevitable part of young children’s lives. In 2015, the Australian Institute of Family Studies reported in their research, “Growing Up in Australia,” that children aged 4-5 are spending an average of 2.2 hours on passive, sedentary screen-based activities such as watching TV, using the computer or playing electronic games, and that 44% of 4-5 year-olds are exceeding the recommended 1 hour of sedentary screen time per day (see Department of Health Movement Guidelines below). In 2017, an Australian Child Health National Poll revealed that a third of pre-schoolers and two thirds of primary school-aged children own a smartphone or tablet, and fifty percent use them unsupervised.<sup>2</sup>

Heritage recognises that early childhood educators have an important responsibility to teach and guide children about the appropriate and safe use of screen-based technologies. Our educators understand that the ease of access to sedentary screen-based activities can discourage physical activity, be habit forming and negatively affect wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> While young children need some ‘down time’,<sup>4</sup> it is understood that they are not naturally inactive for long periods of time, and naturally look for adventure and want to explore.<sup>5</sup> In addition, evidence shows that sedentary, inactive children risk obesity, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure later in life.<sup>6</sup> In view of this, the Heritage policy is to embed physical activity into our educational program<sup>7</sup> while strictly limiting passive sedentary screen time. We aim to educate the Heritage community regarding the value and educational purpose of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, and the potential negative effects of sedentary screen time.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to: Attachment: Office of Commissioner for E-Safety Poster

<sup>2</sup> Refer to: Appendix 2: Background Research

<sup>3</sup> Refer to: Appendix 2: Background Research

<sup>4</sup> Refer to: Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy

<sup>5</sup> Refer to: Physical Activity Policy

<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013): Impact of Physical Inactivity as a Risk Factor for Chronic Conditions: Australian Burden of Disease Study,

<sup>7</sup> Refer to: Physical Activity Policy



The procedures in this policy are based on the screen time guidelines as set out in The Department of Health's Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines (See Section below). **For children under 2 years of age, screen time is not recommended, and for children 2-5 years, it is recommended that passive, sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour per day, and that less is better.** According to the Department of Health, following the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines is associated with better growth, cardiorespiratory and musculoskeletal fitness, cognitive development, psychosocial health/emotional regulation, motor development, body composition, quality of life/well-being and reduced injuries.

Heritage recognises that when screen time is limited and used appropriately as part of the educational program in early childhood educational and care environment, it can enhance children's learning and experiences and may also be helpful in supporting children to develop positive and responsible screen habits. Specifically, it can:

- Support and extend individual children's interests.
- Enhance the development of language, literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills.
- Provide new information or perspectives about the world.
- Encourage physical movement through activity-based programs such as dance programs.
- Increase attention span and ability to focus.
- Provide time to relax and be entertained.<sup>8</sup>

Heritage currently utilises an Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) in the Preschool Room within the guidelines of this policy. When used within best practice guidelines to support educational programs in preschools and schools, research has shown that IWB's Whiteboards can enhance children's play, creativity, learning, and the development of literacy, numeracy and science.<sup>9</sup> Use of the IWB also supports the Heritage Transition to School Policy. The IWB is recognised as an important tool for familiarising children with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) before transitioning to primary school.<sup>10</sup>

## Policy Aim

The Heritage Screen Time Policy has been developed to:

- Comply with all relevant legislation.
- Adhere to the Department of Health's Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines.
- Ensure active play and physical activity embedded in the Philosophy and educational program of the service in order to maximise the normal growth, development and wellbeing of every child in its education and care.
- Ensure procedures are implemented to limit screen time and ensure it is used in ways that support the children's overall health, development and wellbeing.
- Screen-based activities are at all times age appropriate, supervised and support the educational program.
- The Heritage community is informed of the benefits and importance of active play and the potential negative effects of sedentary screen-based activities.

## Rationale

Heritage recognises it has a duty of care to take all reasonable, practicable steps to provide the Heritage community with a safe and healthy environment that supports the emotional and physical wellbeing of employees and children (*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*). In addition, this policy has been developed to comply with the:

- **Education and Care Services National Law Act (ACT) 2010.** National Law Section 167:
  - Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect enrolled children from harm and hazard likely to cause injury.
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations (ACT) 2011.** Regulation 168(2)(h).
  - Policies and procedures are in place in relation to providing a child safe environment.

<sup>8</sup> National Childcare Accreditation Council (2009) - now the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

<sup>9</sup> Johnson & Christie, 2009; Klerfelt, 2007; Marsh, 2005;

<sup>10</sup> Refer to: References: Teachhub.com. (n.d.) Technology in the Classroom: The Benefits of Smart Boards

- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education 2012.** Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety; Quality Area 3: Physical Environment.<sup>11</sup>
  - Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
  - The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning; Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
- **Department of Health, Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (0 to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep, 2017.**
- **The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF):** Outcome 3: Children Have a Strong Sense of Wellbeing. “A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn”.

### Scope

It is understood that there is a shared responsibility and accountability between Heritage management, educators and families to implement this policy due to the potential negative effects of inappropriate use of screen time in early childhood settings.

### Strategies and Practices

The Heritage sedentary screen time procedures are based on the Department of Health’s 24 Movement guidelines.

**The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth-5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep**

Infants < 1 Year	Toddlers, 1-2 Years	Pre-schoolers, 3-5 Years
<p>A healthy 24 hours includes:</p> <p><u>Physical activity:</u> Being physically active several times in a variety of ways, particularly through interactive floor-based play; more is better. For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake.</p> <p><u>Sedentary behaviour:</u> Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in a stroller, car seat or high chair). <b>Screen time is not recommended.</b> When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.</p> <p><u>Sleep:</u> 14 to 17 hours (for those aged 0-3 months) and 12 to 16 hours (for those aged 4-11 months) of good quality sleep, including naps.</p>	<p>A healthy 24 hours includes:</p> <p><u>Physical activity:</u> At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities including energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.</p> <p><u>Sedentary Behaviour:</u> Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in a stroller, car seat or high chair) or sitting for extended periods. <b>For those younger than 2 years, sedentary screen time is not recommended. For those aged 2 years, sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better.</b> When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.</p> <p><u>Sleep:</u> 11 to 14 hours of good quality sleep, including naps, with consistent sleep and wake-up times.</p>	<p>A healthy 24 hours includes:</p> <p><u>Physical activity:</u> At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.</p> <p><u>Sedentary behaviour:</u> Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in a stroller or car seat) or sitting for extended periods. <b>Sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better.</b> When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged. For greater health benefits, replace time restrained or sedentary screen time with additional energetic play, while preserving sufficient sleep.</p> <p><u>Sleep:</u> 10 to 13 hours of good quality sleep, which may include a nap, with consistent sleep and wake-up times.</p>

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Health 2017

<sup>11</sup> Refer to: Appendix 1: Relevant National Law, Regulations and Quality Standards



- The guidelines are designed to be relevant to all apparently healthy infants (less than 1 year), toddlers (1–2 years), and pre-schoolers (3–5 years), irrespective of gender, cultural or language background, geographic location, or socio-economic status of the family.
- The guidelines may be appropriate for young children with a diagnosed disability or medical condition however a health professional should be consulted for additional guidance.
- Developing healthy sleep hygiene in the early years is also cited in the guidelines as important. This includes:
  - A calming and consistent sleep routine
  - **Avoiding screen time before sleep**
  - **Keeping screens out of the bedroom/sleeping environment.**

### Screen Technology utilised at Heritage

Heritage currently has:

- A computer in each Room for educators to utilise for uploading photos for the Day Book.
- A screen on the wall in the Toddler Room to which the computer can be attached.
- An interactive whiteboard (IWB) in the Preschool Room (see Section below).

### The Interactive White Board (IWB)

- The Interactive Whiteboard in the Preschool Room is used to support the educational program to facilitate multisensory learning and maximise the learning of pre-schoolers. It is not used for passive, sedentary entertainment.
- Heritage recognises that IWB's are a social learning technology that, when used within best practice guidelines, provide an environmentally friendly, multisensory, hands-on experience to support the enrichment and extension of children's development and learning in schools,<sup>12</sup> and that educators and educational policymakers support the use of IWB's in the classroom as a powerful teaching tool.<sup>13</sup>
- Heritage understands that the IWB enables educators to access a wide range of resources to support visual learning and project research, and digital cameras and microscopes can be attached. Children can use their finger to write on the board and the use of an IWB facilitates each child's engagement, as they "want to have a go, show they can use it and share their knowledge." In addition, children with different learning styles can engage and learn from each other - visual learners are able to observe the IWB, while tactile learners can learn by touching the board.<sup>14</sup>
- The IWB is used for a maximum of 30 minutes in one session and never for more than one hour in total in one day in the Preschool Room without written permission from parents/guardians. (See Procedures over-page).

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<sup>12</sup> Refer to: References: Tes Blendspace. (n.d.) Interactive Whiteboard in Early Childhood Education.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to: References: Kathryn Harden-Thew. (2012). Transition to School, Success and an Interactive Whiteboard

<sup>14</sup> Refer to: References: University of Wollongong. (n.d.). A study of teachers' integration of interactive whiteboards into four Australian primary school classrooms.



## Heritage Screen Time Procedures

Room	Procedures
Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babies in the Nursery are not given any dedicated screen time.</li> <li>Babies are only able to view the computer screen in the room as the photos are prepared by educators for entry into the Room's Day Book.</li> </ul>
Toddler Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A maximum of 30 minutes of sedentary screen time is allowed in one day for Toddlers, however this is rarely utilised. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toddlers are able to view the computer screen and help with preparing the Day Books.</li> <li>The larger screen on the wall or use of the Preschool Room's interactive whiteboard is used occasionally to enhance the Toddlers' learning as part of the educational program, such as for visual learning and research.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Preschool Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Interactive whiteboard in the Preschool Room is used to facilitate multisensory learning. This may be in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multimedia lessons, presentations and research.</li> <li>Collaborative exercises in early literacy or maths problem solving.</li> <li>Virtual tours such as using Google earth to visit the Amazon rainforest.</li> <li>Children showing their weekend family activities or other photos they wish to share.</li> <li>Showcasing children's work/projects.</li> <li>The IWB will be used for a maximum of 30 minutes in one session.</li> <li>A further 30 minutes may be used on an ad-hoc basis during the same day at the discretion of the Room Leader, in consultation with the Educational Leader, for interactive research or visual learning to support the educational program.</li> <li>The IWB will not be used for more than 1 hour in total in one day, without written permission from parents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Exceptions may occur from time to time to these limits for special occasions, such as Pyjama Day when children may be allowed to watch a movie, however, use of screen technology will never exceed one hour in one day unless written permission is obtained from parents/guardians.</b></p> <p><b>Where parents/guardians do not give permission, alternative activities will be provided related to the special occasion</b></p>	

## Communication

- The Heritage Screen Time Policy is included in the Policies and Procedures section on the website, Heritage Handbook and Policy Manuals in the Front Entrance, Main Office and Staff Programming Room, and explained to families on enrolment.
- Heritage is proactive in informing families about the screen-based activities that children are engaged in and how this is linked to other learning experiences in the program. This information is conveyed through the Day Books.
- Heritage occasionally provides families with tips and ideas for making their child's screen time experiences at home positive such as through the newsletter.



## Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of this policy have been achieved, the Management Committee will:

- Regularly seek feedback from educators, other staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all those in the Heritage community affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, and relevant research and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the Heritage policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy.

## Related Policies

Name	Location
Curriculum and Program Planning Policy	Policy and Procedures in Members Section on website.
Communication and Family Involvement Policy	
Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy	Policy Manuals in Main Office, Front Entrance and Staff Programming Room.
Physical Activity Policy	
Social Media Policy	
Work Health and Safety Policy	Family Handbook, Educator Handbooks

## References and Further Reading

### Legislative References

**Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2018).** *Guide to the National Quality Framework.*

[https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-03/Guide-to-the-NQF\\_0.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-03/Guide-to-the-NQF_0.pdf)

**Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 (ACT).** *Effective: 1 January 2018*

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/current/pdf/2011-42.pdf>

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACT).** *Current Version 1 Feb 2018*

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

### Other References

**ABC Local.** (2009). *TV in Child Care 'Damaging Toddlers'.*

<http://www.rage.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/12/2711686.htm?site=local>

**ABC Parenting.** (2006). *Children and Media. How TV, movies, advertising, computers and video games can shape your child's development and what you can do to create a media-savvy household.* [http://www.abc.net.au/parenting/children\\_and\\_media.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/parenting/children_and_media.htm)

**Australian Council on Children and the Media.** (2012-2019). *Parent Guides.*

<https://childrenandmedia.org.au/resources/fact-sheets>

**Australian Government Department of Health.** (2017). *Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep.*

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/DAAD9AEB38F655D6CA257C75001B546D/\\$File/24hrGuidleines-Factsheet-fa-0-5.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/DAAD9AEB38F655D6CA257C75001B546D/$File/24hrGuidleines-Factsheet-fa-0-5.pdf)

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-gug-staffcarers>

**Australian Government Department of Health.** (2013). *Get Up & Grow. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood - Sedentary behaviour and Screen time.*

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-director-toc~gug-sedentary>

**Child and Youth Health.** (2010). *Screen Time and Children.*

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/screen\\_time.html/context/481](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/screen_time.html/context/481)

**Kathryn Harden-Thew.** (2012). *Transition to School, Success and an Interactive Whiteboard*

<https://www.alea.edu.au/documents/item/1014>





- National Heart Foundation.** (2011). *Sitting Less for Children.*  
<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/PA-Sitting-Less-Child.pdf>
- National Heart Foundation.** (n.d.). *Active Families*  
<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/active-living/active-families>
- Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy.** (2015). *Volume 10 - Are we spinning or is it the board? - Young children's interaction with an interactive whiteboard in preschool.*  
[https://www.idunn.no/dk/2015/03/are\\_we\\_spinning\\_or\\_isittheboard\\_-\\_youngchildrens\\_inte](https://www.idunn.no/dk/2015/03/are_we_spinning_or_isittheboard_-_youngchildrens_inte)
- Raising Children Network.** (2017). *Screen Time 0-18 years.*  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/play-media-technology/screen-time-healthy-screen-use/screen-time>
- Raising Children Network.** (2006-2019). *Preschoolers: screen time & healthy screen use.*  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/screen-time-healthy-screen-use>
- SBS News.** (2017). *The latest Australian Child Health Poll shows one-third of preschoolers and two-thirds of primary school-aged children own a smartphone or tablet.*  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/one-third-of-preschoolers-own-smartphones>
- Teachhub.com.** (n.d.) *Technology in the Classroom: The Benefits of Smart Boards.*  
<https://www.teachhub.com/technology-classroom-benefits-smart-boards>
- Tes Blendspace.** (n.d.) *Interactive Whiteboard in Early Childhood Education.*  
<https://www.tes.com/lessons/ysAh08F7UhFmwig/interactive-whiteboard-in-an-early-childhood-education>
- University of Wollongong.** (n.d.). *A study of teachers' integration of interactive whiteboards into four Australian primary school classrooms.*  
<https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2466&context=edupapers>
- Zero-to-three.** (2019). *Screen-time Can be Quality Time – Here's How*  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2545-screen-time-can-be-quality-time-here-s-how>

## Useful Websites

- Early Childhood Australia - [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)  
 Raising Children Network - [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)  
 Common Sense Media – [www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)

## Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Author and Amendments
1	October 2001	Heritage Committee	
2	December 2009	Heritage Committee	Author: Julia Charters Complete rewrite of the previous Heritage TV and Video Use Policy based on the latest Get Up & Grow guidelines and other references given above.
3	May 2013	Heritage Committee	Author: Julia Charters Updated 'Rationale', 'References' and 'Related Policies' sections. Changed staff to educators; childcare to early childhood education and care; centre to service; parents to families. Added Get up and Grow Recommendations table to 'Strategies and Procedures'.
4	13 August 2019	Heritage Committee	Author: Julia Charters Changed name from TV and Screen Time Policy to Screen Time Policy as TV no longer included in Heritage program. Updated Policy Statement to reflect The Office of the Children's e-safety Commissioner definition of screen time as 'the amount of time spent watching a screen or electronic media for entertainment' - includes watching TV, playing

		<p>electronic games or texting, and does not include time spent on educational activities such as school work, and the use of IWB in the Preschool Room.</p> <p>Added latest research on time spent on recreational screen time for 4 to 5 year old's.</p> <p>Updated the Department of Health's Screen Time Guidelines, now The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep, published in 2017.</p> <p>Updated Procedures Table to reflect the latest research, screen time guidelines, the use of the IWB in the Preschool Room and that TV watching is no longer included in the educational program.</p> <p>Updated Rationale, References and Appendices.</p> <p>Removed consent to watch TV from Enrolment Form.</p>
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## Appendix 1: Relevant National Law, National Regulations and Quality Standards

### National Law Section 167: Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

(1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury.

(2) A nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury.

### Regulation 168(2)(h)

Policies and procedures are required in relation to:

(h) Providing a child safe environment.

### National Quality Standard

#### Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Standard 2.1. Health. Each child's health is promoted.

Element 2.1.1. Wellbeing and comfort. Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

Element 2.1.3. Healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Standard 2.2. Safety. Each child is protected.

Element 2.2.1. Supervision. At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

#### Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Standard 3.2. Use. The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Element 3.2.1. Inclusive environment. Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

Element 3.2.2. Resources support play-based learning. Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

## Appendix 2: Background Research

### Research on TV Watching by Children

Research by The Royal Melbourne Children's Hospital (2009) found that children who have Pay TV at home spent at least 3 hours a day in front of the screen, and that some early childhood education and care services had the TV on all the time. The research suggested this could:

#### *In Infants and Toddlers under 2:*

- Reduce the amount of time they have for active play, social contact with others and language development.
- Affect the development of a full range of eye movement.
- Reduce the length of time they can stay focused.

#### *In Toddlers and Pre-schoolers (2-5 years), be associated with:*

- Less active, outdoor and creative play time.
- An increased risk of being overweight and unhealthy eating habits.
- Sub-optimal muscle and bone growth.
- Poorer social skills.
- Fewer opportunities to develop decision-making, self-awareness and self-regulation skills
- Slower development of language skills and short-term memory.
- Television-viewing habits that may continue through childhood.

In addition, according to Sutherland (2004), when TV viewing is not carefully monitored, there may be other harmful impacts on children such as:

- Causing them to feel fear and become excessively worried about the world and to act out the negative things they have seen.
- Increased exposure to advertising.

Research on Smartphones and Tablets Use by Children

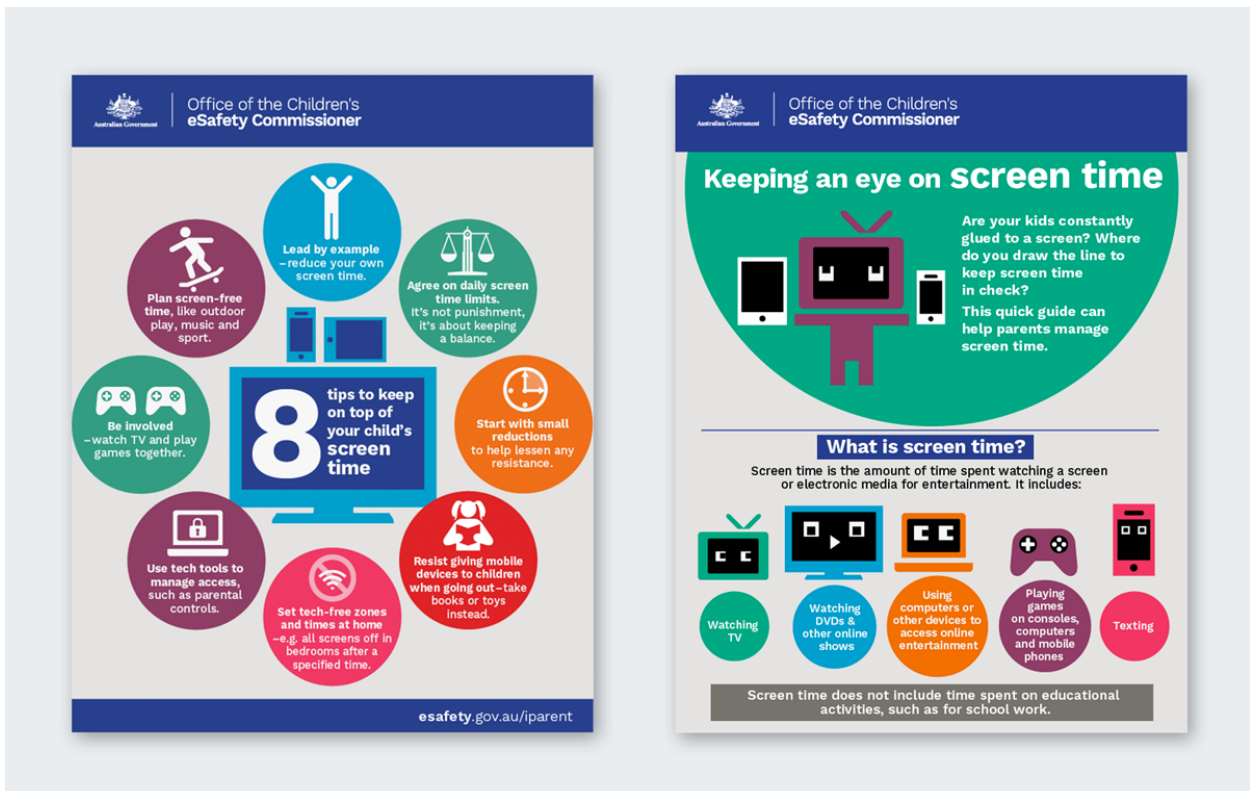
According to Dr Anthea Rhodes, Director of the Australian Child Health Poll,<sup>15</sup> and a paediatrician at The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne, paediatricians are increasingly seeing the consequences of excessive screen and media use in children as it replaces physical playtime and face-to-face contact, critical for a young child’s brain and body development. She concluded the Poll showed, “there is very little evidence to support the idea a smartphone or tablet boosts a toddler’s development, and plenty of evidence linking excessive use to health problems”. These are cited as:

- Sleep difficulties - almost half of children in the poll were using screen-based devices at bedtime and 1 in 4 reporting sleep problems as a result.
- Unhealthy weight gain.
- Difficulties with social and emotional wellbeing.

In addition, the Poll found:

- Two thirds of families reported conflict relating to screen-time usage.
- 85% of parents used screens to occupy children in order to get things done.
- A parent with high levels of screen use is more likely to have a child with high levels of use.
- Three quarters of parents of children under six said they do not limit screen use.

**Attachement: Screen Time Poster**



<sup>15</sup> Refer to: References and Further Reading