

Using Digital Technology

Research has shown that high amounts of online use by children can negatively impact their attention span, sleeping patterns and imagination. Devices such as smartphones and tablets provide high levels of light and brain stimulation which can result in a decrease in overall sleep, decrease in quality of sleep and increase in sleepiness during the day.

Ways to promote children's safe online use:

- open and ongoing communication with children about the importance of staying safe online
- monitoring the amount of time children spend online
- establishing family rules for using devices. It is important to support children to implement boundaries. Talking to children about their intentions for use as well as setting time limits is also important.
- filters and other tools to assist in limiting exposure to potentially harmful material
- parental familiarisation with the technology used by children
- modelling positive online behaviour
- ensuring time on devices occurs in the presence of parents and carers rather than in isolation
- supporting children to use effective passwords and security settings
- education on the public nature of uploading information and images as well as social media's restrictions related to age
- role-playing strategies for children to respond to inappropriate online behaviour e.g. confronting the person, blocking and deleting contacts and reporting of negative online behaviour
- perspective-taking - when children have the ability to think about how their actions impact others they learn to develop compassion and empathy
- Educating children on safe use can begin before they even have their own device, with adults communicating with children about appropriate online behaviour, and role-modelling the management of any potential issues that may arise

Supporting children to establish healthy digital habits early on has positive flow-on effects to their safe use of devices and engagement in the internet.