

PRE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

DIGITAL DIET FOR YOUNG MINDS: MANAGING SCREEN TIME EFFECTIVELY

Dear Parents,

At Bal Bharati Public School, Noida, we firmly believe in the philosophy of "*Catch them Young*" as laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning begins at the grass root level. In these formative years, young children learn primarily through observation and imitation. This makes it essential for us as adults to model positive behaviour and spend **meaningful, screen-free time** with our little ones.

Growing Concerns over Screen Time:

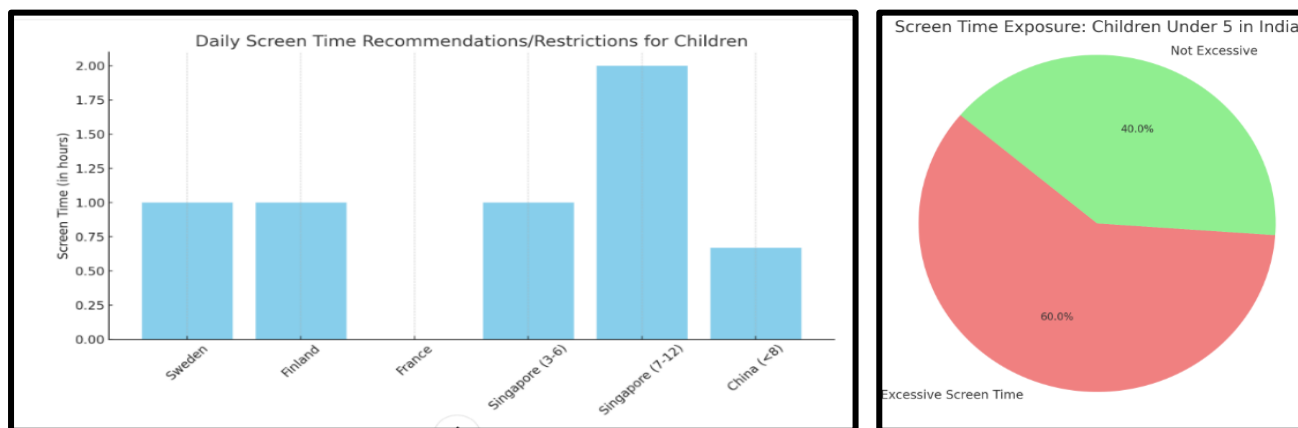
Class teachers have observed that –

- ✓ Some children show signs of screen addiction, frequently insisting that the Senses panel be turned on during the class.
- ✓ Students eat their food only when the panel is on, indicating a dependency on screens even during mealtimes at home.
- ✓ The language and accents of several students reflect influence from cartoon shows and online content such as YouTube. This influence on their language development is a matter of concern for us as educators.

The above behaviour patterns are a cause for concern, as they do not support healthy development and well-being of our children and highlight the urgent need for mindful screen time and greater emphasis on interactive, real-world learning experiences. We believe that with our parents' cooperation, we can guide our children towards healthier habits and balanced development, increasing the scope for indulging the children in physical activities and games or other interesting activities.

To illustrate the impact of screen time on young children, let's consider the following data:

In India, a study found that over 60% of children under five are exposed to excessive screen time, leading to negative physical, mental, and social impacts.



In Sweden, the Public Health Authority has recommended NO screen time for children under two years old and limits of one hour per day for children aged two to five.

In Finland, new guidelines advice that children under two should not use any screens at all, and children aged two to five should have a maximum of one hour of screen time per day.

In France, leading health societies in France have advocated for a complete ban on screen exposure for children under six, citing detrimental effects on neurological development, learning abilities, emotional well-being, sleep, and physical health. They emphasize that even brief exposure can negatively impact children's development.

Even in Singapore, the Ministry of Health has recommended that children aged three to six should have less than one hour of screen time per day, excluding schoolwork. For children aged seven to twelve, screen time should not exceed two hours daily. These guidelines are part of a broader strategy to promote healthier habits among children.

China has implemented regulations to limit screen time among minors. For instance, children under the age of 18 are restricted from accessing the internet on mobile devices between 10 pm and 6 am without parental bypass. Additionally, smartphone usage is capped at 40 minutes a day for children younger than eight.

The above mentioned countries have already taken bold steps by banning screen time during early education, focusing more on developing life skills by providing more of hands-on learning activities enhancing creativity, and face-to-face interaction.

What can we do as Parents?

To support your child's holistic growth, we encourage you to adopt some healthy habits at home:

- **Watch cartoons and programmes with your child** to guide their understanding and provide context.
- **Set clear limits on screen time** and prioritize physical play and outdoor activities to enhance physical development and well being.
- **Choose age-appropriate, educational content** that supports language and concept development.
- **Help children understand the difference between fiction and reality**, especially with animated characters.
- **Use filtering and parental control apps** to block inappropriate content and ensure safe viewing.
- **Explore enriching alternatives** like *Discovery Kids*, *National Geographic*, and *Animal Planet* for engaging, informative content.
- **Opt for story time with audio CDs** over screen-based entertainment—this fosters better listening and comprehension skills.
- **Encourage programmes with language learning tools**, such as alphabet songs, rhymes, and vocabulary games.

There's growing concern about the cartoon shows children are watching. While some promote positive values, others depict aggression and violence. Parents are also requested to monitor and guide, the shows children watch to ensure they're exposed to age and stage appropriate content. The Pre Primary teachers have delved deep into this concern and have prepared a list of Cartoons appropriate for children and others inappropriate for viewing as given below :

Cartoon Series recommended for children

- Jalebi street (English / Hindi)
- Kent the Elephant (English / Hindi)
- Sid the Scientist (English)
- Gattu and Chinki (Hindi / English)
- Peppa Pig (English/ Hindi)
- Mickey Mouse Club (English)
- Tumble Leaf (English)
- Hey Duggee (English)
- Pip and Posy (English)
- Peep and the big wide world (English)
- Dora, The Explorer

Cartoon Series not recommended for children

- Doraemon
- Shinchon
- Tom and Jerry
- Oggy and the cockroaches
- Motu Patlu
- Vir the Robot Boy
- Powerpuff Girls
- Cocomelon
- The Simpsons
- Family guy
- Chota Bheem
- Beavis and Butthead

Indian parenting traditions have long emphasized storytelling, play, observation of nature, and meaningful family interactions, all of which offer effective yet screen-free learning. Let us draw strength from these practices and blend them meaningfully with modern parenting strategies.

Together, by making mindful choices, we can shape a positive and balanced environment for our children, one that nurtures their imagination, encourages curiosity, and builds strong values.

Let's work hand in hand to raise responsible, empathetic, and confident individuals.

Asha Prabhakar
Asha Prabhakar
 (Principal)

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