



Department
for Education

Early years screen time advisory group

Terms of reference

Background

In 2019, the UK's Chief Medical Officers published [advice for parents and carers on children's screen-based activities](#).

While the government continues to closely monitor the emerging evidence base on the causal relationship between screen time, social media and children's health, it has asked two leading figures to review the currently available advice on early years screen time and produce new government guidance.

Purpose

The new guidance on screen time for children under five will aim to give parents confidence and practical support to make informed decisions that work for their children, based on the latest evidence about child development.

Leadership

Professor Russell Viner, a paediatrician and expert in children's health, and Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children's Commissioner for England, will co-chair a group of experts to write the new guidance. The membership list will be published in due course.

Scope

The guidance will have three key goals. It will:

- empower parental decision-making: help parents understand how screens fit into children's lives alongside other activities, without prescribing rigid rules that don't account for individual family circumstances.
- provide evidence-based clarity: replace confusion from numerous, often contradictory sources with clear, trusted information developed by experts.
- support positive child development: ensure children have a balanced range of experiences – talking, playing, reading, exploring – that build the foundations for school readiness.

Approach and process

The co-chairs will consider a range of evidence, including but not limited to interventions to reduce screen time and children's wider capabilities at different ages from a developmental perspective.

In conducting the review, the co-chairs are expected to consult widely, including with parents, children, early years stakeholders, children's charities and parent support organisations.

Governance

The two co-chairs are responsible for conducting the review. They will be supported by a secretariat based in the Department for Education (DfE) and the final guidance will be published by DfE.

Output

The review will produce new guidance for publication by 1 April 2026.

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