

Home Workstation Set-Up



Tips to help with **safety, comfort & focus** when using a computer.

Why does it matter how a child sits to use a computer?

If not positioned properly, children may experience difficulty concentrating, difficulty using hands & fine motor skills, fatigue, discomfort, and stress in their back muscles causing pain. Even if just sitting for a short time, **proper sitting helps focus!**

Signs that a child is not seated properly:

- swinging feet
- feet wrapped around chair legs
- slouching
- sitting on feet
- leaning

Click here to watch video to learn the "Benefits of Good Posture"

Body Position



"90-90-90" Rule

Knees, hips, and feet should all be bent at 90 degree angles, if possible.

- ✓ **HEAD** - level and forward facing
- ✓ **EYES** - level with top of the screen
- ✓ **BACK** - fully supported
- ✓ **SHOULDERS** - relaxed and upper arms hang normally at the side of the body
- ✓ **ELBOWS** stay in close to the body and are bent between 90 - 120 degrees
- ✓ **HANDS, wrists, and arms** - straight, roughly parallel to the floor
- ✓ **THIGHS & HIPS** - supported and parallel to the floor
- ✓ **KNEES** - bent at 90 degrees
- ✓ **FEET** are fully supported by floor or footrest.

Click for more information.

Modifying the Work Space



What if the chair and desk is not the right size for the child?

Feet not touching the floor?

Try a smaller chair, a foot stool, or box as foot rest.



Slouching?

Raise computer monitor - place it securely on a stand or books. Pair laptop with wireless keyboard.



Desk too high? Awkward arm position?

Add a cushion to chair or try higher chair.



Not resting on back rest?

Try a smaller chair or add a cushion between back and back rest.



Using the Computer

Click for more information from **Canada Safety Council**



- **Use a mouse, if possible.** For small hands, a mouse is generally easier to use than a touch pad.



- **Be kind to the eyes.** Keep monitor an arm's length away from face.



- **Take breaks and limit total screen time.** Too much time looking at the screen can lead to headaches, eye strain, blurred vision. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



- **Avoid glare on the screen.** Change direction of monitor if sun or lights cause glare.



- **Practice keyboarding skills.** Typing with all fingers will make typing easier, faster, and more accurate. [CLICK HERE](#) to try a free online typing program.



- **Encourage movement.** It is okay for children to fidget and move around when using computer.

Take a Break!

Breaks from sitting in front of a computer **prevent pain and injury, and help us stay alert!**



Every 15-20 Minutes: Stand up, look away from screen, stretch.

Every 60 minutes: Take at least a 10 minute active break.

Click for movement break videos



STRETCH

Prevent pain. Make sure to stretch hands, arms, shoulders, neck and back!



CHANGE POSITIONS throughout the day.

Engage in activities in a variety of ways when not using the computer. Stand, kneel, etc.



Algonquin & Lakeshore
Catholic District School Board

Steph Lackey, OT Reg. (Ont.)
Occupational Therapist
slackey@alcdsb.on.ca

SOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2017 August 28). *Children. Give Your Child's Eyes a Screen-Time Break: Here's Why.* Healthy Children. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/What-Too-Much-Screen-Time-Does-to-Your-Childs-Eyes.aspx>
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health. (2020, April 16). *Working in a Sitting Position - What to Avoid while Sitting.* OSH Answers. Retrieved from https://hsreport.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/sitting/sitting_poor.html
- Smith-Zuzovsky, N., & Exner, C. E. (2004). The effect of seated positioning quality on typical 6- and 7-year-old children's object manipulation skills. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 58, 380-388.
- Straker, L. and Maslen, B. and Burgess-limerick, R. and Johnson, P. and Dennerlein, J. 2010. Evidence-based guidelines for the wise use of computers by children : Physical development guidelines. *Ergonomics*. 53 (4): pp. 458-477 Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00140130903556344?needAccess=true>
- Typing Pal. (2020.). *Typing Method.* Retrieved from <https://www.typingpal.com/en/documentation/school-edition/pedagogical-resources/typing-method>
- United States Department of Labor. (n.d.). *Computer Workstations eTool.* Occupational Health and Safety Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/positions.html>