

Brief: Virtual Learning in K-12 Settings; How much is too much?

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How much virtual learning time is too much? Careful consideration as to length of learning time must be given and the developmental needs of children and adolescents considered.

Likewise, we have all heard the horror stories of teachers taking off during the spring shut down to go on out-of-state vacations juxtaposed with children and families being overwhelmed by hours of daily work.

Key considerations then are:

1. Bringing staff/buildings to common ground on length of instructional day/time on task for students.
2. Respecting screen time recommendations of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
3. Ensuring planning across departments/teams to support this work.
4. Supervising instruction in this format across grade levels, buildings and content areas.



Guidance for Length of Instructional Time to Support Students During Virtual Learning

Research is scant and state guidance for length of virtual instructional time/day is varied or non-existent in New York. “No two states are the same,” says Robert Hull, CEO of the National Association of State Boards of Education. However, consider presenting the guidelines offered by other states for adoption or modification. Illinois, for example, advises schools to assign no more than 90 minutes of work per day to younger students, while high school students can expend up to 45 minutes per subject for a total of 4.5 hours. Information from other states is as follows:

State	Virtual Instruction Time Guideline (Grade Levels: Minutes/Day)	State	Virtual Instruction Time Guideline (Grade Levels: Minutes/Day)
ILLINOIS	K-2: 90 minutes/day (max.) 3-5: 120 minutes/day (max.) 6-8: 180 minutes/day (max.) 9-12: 270 minutes/day (max.)	NEW MEXICO	PK: 30 minutes/day K-1: 45 minutes/day 2-3: 60 minutes/day 4-5: 90 minutes/day 6-12: 180 minutes/day (max.)
INDIANA	K-1: 45 minutes/day (minimum) 2-4: 60 minutes/day (minimum) 5-6: 90 minutes/day (minimum) 7-12: 180 minutes/day (max.)	OKLAHOMA	K: 45 minutes/day 1-2: 70 minutes/day 3-5: 80 minutes/day 6-12: 180 minutes/day
KANSAS	K-1: 45 minutes/day (max.) 2-3: 60 minutes/day (max.) 4-5: 90 minutes/day (max.) 6-12: 180 minutes/day (max.)	OREGON	K-1: 45 minutes/day (max.) 2-3: 60 minutes/day (max.) 4-5: 90 minutes/day (max.) 6-12: 180 minutes (max.) All limits include time for supplemental activities in Oregon’s guidance.
NEW HAMPSHIRE	K-5: less than 120 minutes/day online, plus reading offline 6-12: 180 minutes/day (max.)	WEST VIRGINIA	K-2: 90 minutes/day 3-5: 120 minutes/day 6-8: 150 minutes/day 9-12: 180 minutes/day

Source: State education department websites of [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#), [Kansas](#), [New Mexico](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Oregon](#), [West Virginia](#) and [New Hampshire Public Radio](#),
<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/high-amounts-screen-time-begin-early-infancy-nih-study-suggests>,
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>