

Enjoy the Moment...

Have Fun, Connect and Wonder, Pause and Wait

Screen Media Recommendations

In 2016, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released updated guidelines for “screen media”. These guidelines apply to all screens. This includes smartphones, tablets, computers and television. Parents shouldn’t feel pressured to introduce technology early. If a parent chooses to introduce “screen media” here are some recommendations:

For Children under 18 months:

- Discourage screen media (other than video chatting).

Infants learn best by interacting with people. Infants learn best by touching, feeling, exploring, shaking and smelling. Infants learn best by using their hands and using their minds.

Infants learn less from screens because it is difficult for infants to relate screen information to the real world. This is called the “transfer deficit”.

For Children 18 months to 5 years:

- Limit screen time to one hour or less per day.
- Choose high quality programming/apps.
- Watch together with your child so you can talk about what your child is seeing or doing. This will help your child connect screen information with the real world.
- Avoid screen use during meals. Use mealtimes to connect and have conversations.
- Avoid screen use for one hour before bedtime. Screen use before bedtime can affect a child’s ability to calm and can disrupt sleep.
- Avoid using media as the only way to calm your child when upset.

Using media as a strategy to calm your child could negatively affect their ability to calm on their own.



What about video chatting?

- Unlike other media use, Face Time and Skype allow for interaction. When an infant is video chatting, partners can **read the infant's cues** and **respond immediately** to what the infant is doing or saying. Partners can **copy** the infant's sounds or actions and take turns.

What is high quality programming?

- High quality programming is age-appropriate, interactive, non-violent and reflects children's everyday experiences.
- Programs with characters that talk to the child, ask questions and pause for the child to take a turn promote language development.
- Co-view and participate in children's screen use to increase learning.
- Avoid fast paced programs and apps with lots of distracting content.

What about when the TV is on in the background?

- Research shows that *even* when the television is on, *in the background*, infants and caregivers are **speaking less**.
- Research shows background television **interferes** with a child's learning.
- **Turn off** televisions and other screens when not in use.

What about Parents Screen Use?

- Heavy parent use of mobile devices is associated with **less talking** and **less nonverbal interactions** between parents and children.
- Studies suggest that the longer parents use their mobile device, the more likely children are to misbehave.
- **Be a good role model**. Parent media use is a strong predictor of child media use.



Interested in building a Family Media Use Plan? Visit www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan

References

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