Screen Time and Young Children

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages parents and caregivers to help their children develop healthy media use habits from the beginning.

**Children younger than 18 months**
- Screen media other than video-chatting should not be used.
- Infants' brains are not developed enough yet to make sense of screen content.

**Children 18 to 24 months**
- If parents want to share digital media with their toddlers, they should choose high-quality programming or apps and use them together with children, because this is how toddlers learn best.
  - Use science-based, educational organizations for reviews on videos, games, and apps for toddlers.
- Don't allow children to use media by themselves.

**Children 2-5 years**
- Limit screen use to no more than 1 hour a day of high-quality programming.
- When using screens, watch or play with children.
- Find activities to do together that are healthy for the body and mind (e.g., reading, talking, and playing together).

**Excessive screen time**
- Can be habit-forming. The more time a young child uses screens, the harder it is for them to turn off screens as an older child.
- Is linked to sleep that is not regular and language delays for children under 3.
- Is connected with problems later in childhood, including lower math scores and school success, less physical activity, social problems, and a higher Body Mass Index.
- Means less time for creative play and problem solving.

**Children need time away from media**
The more time children spend on screens, the less time they spend on important activities like physical exploration, time spent with adults and peers, and being bored. Fun fact: boredom is super important for children – dealing with the unpleasantness of boredom helps children learn to self-soothe, problem solve, and use their imaginations! Plus, screen overuse can make it hard for children to sleep, self-regulate, and pay attention.