

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.