



Making Thoughtful Choices About Screen Time

What does the research say?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- **No screen time for children under 2 years old**, except for video chatting with loved ones.
- **1 hour per day max for children ages 2–5**, focused on high-quality, age-appropriate content—and ideally with a caregiver watching alongside.



Screens are a tool, not a babysitter.

Young children learn best through active play, loving relationships, and real-life experiences. But let's be real—screens are part of life. The key is how you use them.

How to make screen time more meaningful:

1. **Watch together:** Sit with your child while they watch. Ask questions like, “What do you think is happening?” or “What would you do if you were that character?”
2. **Talk about it:** After the show, chat about what they saw. “Who was your favorite character?” “Did anything surprise you?”
3. **Name and label:** Help your child build vocabulary by pointing out and naming people, places, colors, and actions they see on screen.
4. **Get moving:** Join in! Dance with the characters, hop like a frog, or march around the room. Turn passive watching into active fun.
5. **Connect it to real life:** If you watched a show about a garbage truck, point it out when the real one comes down the street: “Remember the show this morning? Look—it’s our own garbage truck!”
6. **Make it creative:** After watching, act out the story together using stuffed animals, puppets, or just your imagination. Retelling stories builds memory, language, and emotional skills.
7. **Skip screens as a comfort tool:** Using screens to soothe or help kids fall asleep can interfere with emotional development and sleep quality. Stick to calming, connected bedtime routines like stories, snuggles, or a gentle song.

Remember: You’re the expert on your child. Use screens in ways that support—not replace—your connection.

