

# How much screen time should my child have?



Research shows that children younger than 5 years old don't learn well from screens (like TV, computer games, iPads, or tablets). **They learn best when they explore the world around them and connect in-person with people who love them.** This is how they learn to talk, develop motor skills, problem solve, and express their emotions.

Don't feel pressured to introduce screens to your child at a young age. Children learn how to use them quickly when they're introduced—even if it isn't when they're young. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following screen time limits for infants and children.

## 0 to 18 months old

- No screen time except for video-chatting (FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp) with other people your child knows (like a grandparent).

## 18 to 24 months old

- Keep screen time limited (less than 1 hour each day) and watch high-quality children's programs with your child. They learn best when you watch with them and explain what they're watching. High-quality programs are:
  - ➔ **Age appropriate.** The content was designed to be easily understood by young children by developmental experts.
  - ➔ **Interactive.** The content encourages children to sing-along, name a color, move around, or do something else active.
  - ➔ **Educational.** The content teaches about emotions, feelings, letters, numbers, or other topics.

## 2 to 5 years old

- Keep screen time to 1 hour a day. Your child still learns best when you watch with them and apply what they see to the world around them.

## Kids who get too much screen time may not learn important skills or reach developmental milestones as quickly.

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Set screen time routines for your children.

### You're in charge of:

- ➔ When they use screens.
- ➔ What they use screens for.
- ➔ How long they use or watch screens.

The routines you set when your children are young will help them as they grow. Too much screen time in older children can lead to too much weight gain, not enough sleep, depression, and other health problems.



### How can I limit my child's screen time?

- Turn off all screens during mealtimes.
- Don't let kids have screens in their bedrooms.
- Try not to use screens 1 hour before bedtime. It may take longer for your child to fall asleep or they may not sleep as well if they watch TV or use a phone or tablet right before bed.
- Make sure your child has playtime with you and other children without any screens.
- Turn off the TV and other devices when you're not using them. This will limit distractions and help your child focus on what they're doing.
- Start a timer when you start screen time. Have another activity ready for your child to do when screen time ends.
- Bring toys, books, or a coloring book and crayons for your child to play with when you go to appointments or leave the house. They can play with these instead of a phone or tablet.