



Listening to Podcasts with Young Children: A Guide for Parents

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Looking for activities to keep your preschool-aged children entertained?

Podcasts can be a great alternative to watching TV or playing video games. Podcasts are like radio shows, but you listen by streaming or downloading episodes to a phone, tablet or computer. Most podcasts are free. You can listen to them with your children and talk about what you hear.

Choosing Podcasts

There are podcasts for every age and interest. Stories, games, science, history, music, and language are just a few of the topics you and your children can explore.

Use these suggestions to choose podcasts for your family.

- **Follow your children's interests.** Allowing your children to choose the topic will help keep them engaged.
- **Listen to the entire podcast before letting your children listen.** By listening first, you can make sure the podcast is appropriate for your children. You can also talk with your children about the podcast or answer their questions.

- **Look for podcasts from a favorite video, game, or TV show.** If you have trouble finding podcasts your children like, many videos, games and TV shows have podcasts. Your children can follow their favorite characters without watching a screen.

Finding Podcasts

Friends, teachers, family members, and librarians are great people to ask for podcast suggestions. Many websites have suggestions too.

- **Common Sense Media** put together a list of 25 great podcasts for children (<https://www.common Sense Media.org/blog/the-best-podcasts-for-kids>).
- **Kids Listen** collected over 30 podcasts just for children (<https://app.kidslisten.org/>).
- **Pandora** has hundreds of podcasts for kids (<https://www.pandora.com/search/podcast%20kids/podcasts>).
- **Leela Kids** is a podcast app just for kids (<https://leelalabs.com/>).

Share the Listening Experience

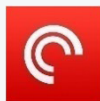
Listening together is a great way to learn and have fun as a family. While listening, ask questions, talk about what is happening, and explain what the podcast is about. You can also:

- Ditch the screens and headphones on your next car ride. Instead, listen to a podcast using the car's speakers so the whole family can interact with the podcast together.
- Are you listening to a story? Act it out with your children and get silly.
- Try listening to podcasts in another language. **Eat Your Spanish** has interactive games (<https://www.eatyourspanishpodcast.com/>) and **Leela Kids** (<https://leelalabs.com/>) can help you find podcasts in different languages.

Downloading a Podcast App

The easiest way to listen to podcasts is to download a podcast app to your device (a phone, tablet, or computer). Most podcasts are not app-specific and can be found on any app. Here are two popular podcast apps.

- Pocket Casts is a free app and available for most devices (apple and android) (<https://www.pocketcasts.com/>).
- Apple Podcast comes installed on all iPhones and iPads (<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201859>).



After downloading a podcast app, use it to search for and play podcasts. You can stream episodes of the podcast or download them to your device so that you can listen even when you are not connected to the internet.

You can also listen to many podcasts online without downloading an app. When you have found a podcast you want to listen to, search for its website to see if you can stream it. Or visit the website for your child's favorite video, game, or TV show to see if they have a podcast!

Protecting Young Ears

Teach your children safe listening habits and model safe behavior for them. When possible, listen to podcasts without headphones so you and your children can talk while listening. When headphones are needed:

- Make sure volume levels are no higher than about half of a device's maximum level. The lower the volume, the better.¹
- Children should be able to hear and respond if you ask them a question when headphones are on. If they do not respond, turn down the volume.²

What do the Experts Say?

There is not a lot of research on the positive or negative effects of podcasts on children.³

However, just like other media, they should not be a substitute for interacting with your children. Listen together and talk about the podcast with your children to help them understand what they hear.³

Ask your children questions, answer their questions, and provide explanations as you listen. By talking with your children, you can help them develop their problem solving and communication skills.⁴

Learn More About Podcasts

- **Discover Pods** created a how-to guide for those new to podcasts and podcast players (<https://discoverpods.com/how-to-listen-to-podcasts-guide-for-beginners/>).
- **Today's Parent** has an ultimate guide to podcasts for parents (<https://www.todayparent.com/family/parenting/parents-guide-to-podcasts-for-kids/>).
- **Common Sense Media** reviews podcasts for children (<https://www.common Sense Media.org/blog/parents-guide-to-podcasts>).

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