



Screen Time with Young Children

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Screen time (using any device with a screen, such as a phone, TV, iPad or tablet, PlayStation or computer) has become part of most family's everyday lives. Below are suggestions for how to make screen time a fun learning experience for the whole family.

Consider Your Children's Ages

Experts recommend that children of all ages should have limited amounts of screen time.¹

- **Children younger than 2 years old:** Avoid all screen time except for supervised video-chatting (FaceTime, Skype) with family.¹
- **Children 2 to 5 years old:** Try to keep screen time to 1 hour or less each day. The amount of time children use screens by themselves, without adult supervision, should be very limited.¹

Set Limits on Screen Time

Work together as a family to decide how often and where you will use screens.^{2,3}

- Help your children turn off screens at least one hour before bedtime. Using screens right before bed can lead to a bad night's sleep.
- Create screen-free family times or locations. For example, try putting down screens during mealtimes

and instead talking about what happened during the day. Or agree that screens will not be used in bedrooms.

- Do not let screen time replace playing outside or exercise. Being active will help your family stay healthy.

Share Screen Time with Your Children

Young children will learn more when you use screens with them. Try asking a few of the questions listed in Box 1 below. Children should use screens on their own as little as possible.^{1,2,4}

- Watch age-appropriate videos with your children and talk about what is happening on the screen. Talking with your children will help them understand what they are watching.
- Play games together and talk about what will happen next or how to win the game.
- Use an app that lets you draw pictures (for example: www.sesamestreet.org/art-maker) and talk with your children about the colors and shapes you are using.
- If the video, app or game you are watching is teaching something, pause and repeat the lesson for your child. Children learn best when you repeat and reinforce what they see on a screen. You can also repeat the lesson during other parts of your day.

Box 1: Ask Questions While Using Screens

Asking your children questions while using screens is a great way to make screen time a learning experience.

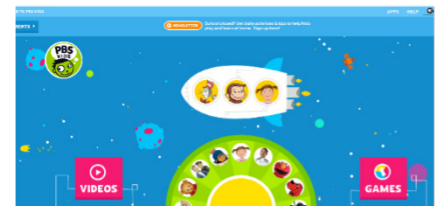
Before beginning a video, story, or game, ask:	During the video, story, or game, pause the screen and ask:	After the video, story or game, ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">What do you think this will be about? Why do you think that?Which characters do you think we will see?Do you think it will be happy, sad, scary, or funny?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is happening right now?Which character is your favorite so far?What word or letter is that? (while pointing to a word or letter) Then tell your children what the word means or what the letter sounds like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What happened? Why do you think that happened?How was this the same as other things you have seen? How was it different?Was it happy, sad, scary, or funny?What were you thinking about while watching it?



Check out These Free Websites for Fun Educational Activities

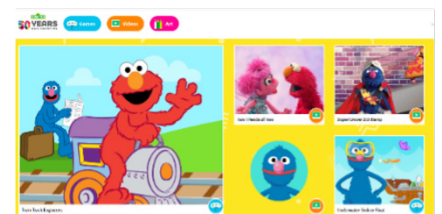
pbskids.org

The PBS Kids website has games, videos and apps to help children play and learn.



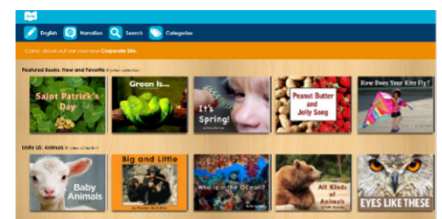
sesamestreet.org

Sesame Street's website has games, videos, and art apps that feature characters from the TV show.



uniteforliteracy.com

The Unite for Literacy website has digital books you can read with your child. Use the narration option to hear the books read in several different languages



Carefully Select Screen Time Activities

Use these suggestions to choose screen time activities that are right for your family.

- What is your child interested in?** Does your child like cars, cats, or crafts? Picking screen time activities that match their interests will help you both have a fun learning experience.
- Is there a lot of activity on the screen?** Too much activity can be confusing for young children. Pick activities where only a few things happen on the screen at once. Make sure you can pause the app, game, or video. Talk with your children while watching to help them understand the action on the screen.
- Have you watched the video, played the game or used the app before showing it to your child?** It is always best to watch entire videos, play games and use apps before showing them to your children.

Learn More About Screen Time

- The American Academy of Pediatrics' website has tools to help you make a family screen time plan. healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx.
Watch a video about the importance of a family screen time plan here: youtu.be/KAIVRZ6pkoo.
- Common Sense Media provides reviews of free, age-appropriate games, apps, and websites to help you choose the right entertainment for your entire family. commonsensemedia.org/lists/free-educational-apps-games-and-websites
- The Mayo Clinic has information about how screen time impacts children and recommendations for managing screen time. [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952)

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