

# Screen Time

The guidelines offered below by the American Pediatric Association are widely accepted and seem to present some flexibility. I tend to recommend to families that a good rule of thumb is that a parent/mature adult family member/caregiver is watching-joining in age-appropriate content *with the child* at least half the time that the child is using a screen. This can then make it more about the relationship, with the back and forth comments and observations about what the child is watching serving as opportunities to help the child make sense of what is being watched and more importantly learn more about each other.

*Managing a child's screen time is challenging for families. Your child is never too young for a screen-time plan. Consider the following as a guideline:*

*Until 18 months of age limit screen use to video chatting along with an adult (for example, with a parent who is out of town).*

*Between 18 and 24 months screen time should be limited to watching educational programming with a caregiver.*

*For children 2-5, limit non-educational screen time to about 1 hour per weekday and 3 hours on the weekend days.*

*For ages 6 and older, encourage healthy habits and limit activities that include screens.*

*Turn off all screens during family meals and outings.*

*Learn about and use parental controls.*

*Avoid using screens as pacifiers, babysitters, or to stop tantrums.*

*Turn off screens and remove them from bedrooms 30-60 minutes before bedtime.*

*Screens are here to stay and can offer many positives. It's never too early to develop a screen-time plan with your family. Let your children share their ideas and concerns. Some additional tips to keep in mind are:*

***Familiarize yourself with programming to make sure it is age-appropriate.***

***Talk to your child about what they are seeing. Point out good behavior, such as cooperation, friendship, and concern for others. Make connections to meaningful events or places of interest.***

*Be aware of advertising and how it influences choices.*

*Encourage your child to learn other activities such as sports, music, art, and hobbies that do not involve screens.*

*Set a good example with your own safe and healthy screen habits.*

*Teach children about online privacy and safety.*

*Actively decide when your child is ready for a personal device.*

*Encourage using screens in ways that build creativity and connection with family and friends.*

*Consider your child or teen's maturity and habits. The right plan for one family may not be a good fit for another.*

*Positive and healthy screen use is possible with proper guidance and consistency.*

From

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