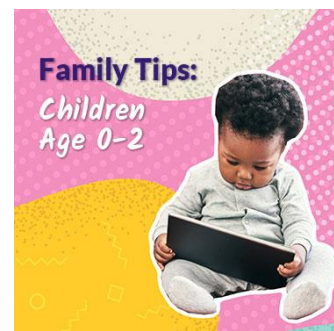


Managing TV Shows, Videos, and Apps with Young Kids

Each family has unique needs and expectations related to television, phones, and tablets at home. You might wonder if it's harmful to let your young child watch a little television or play with your phone. You also might wonder how to get dinner on the table if you don't let your child watch some TV or play with your phone! These four tips can help you support your young child's healthy development and make the best choices for your family.



Check out these 4 tips 

1

Choose real people and real objects over screens.

Children from birth to age 2 learn by exploring the world with all their senses and interacting with loving caregivers. Especially with children younger than 18 months old, try not to use the television, phones, or tablets except for video calls. If you really need a little time (to take a shower or get an important chore done, etc.) a small amount of screen time probably won't hurt, but it also won't help your young child learn.

Ask yourself: Instead of turning on the television or handing my child the phone, is there another way I can encourage them to play on their own? Can an older sibling play with them? Is there a simple activity I can set up?

2

Watch and play together -- and talk about it!

When your young child is watching a TV show or video, or playing an app, watch or play with them. Ask questions, point at things on the screen, and name what you see. The most important thing is that time spent with screens doesn't replace time spent with a loving caregiver. Video-chatting can be a great option to help your young child bond with family or friends far away. On video chat, they can read books, play simple games, sing together, and more.

Ask yourself: When my young child is watching a TV show or video, or playing an app, is there a sibling or adult who can watch or play with them?

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3

Choose short and simple TV shows, videos, or apps.

Videos and apps with lots of sounds, pop-up ads, or fast interactions will be too distracting for young children. Try simple activities like looking at the photos on your phone together or watching short nursery rhyme videos. You can use Common Sense Media to find high-quality content for children age 2 and up. Beware of products that advertise themselves as educational -- few really are.

Ask yourself: Is the TV show, video, or app fast-paced or loud? Does it have lots of distracting features?

4

Think about your own habits.

Research shows that having television on in the background at home can lead to fewer and poorer interactions with your child. Try to keep the television off when you can, and silence your phone to reduce the distractions.

Ask yourself: Am I distracted by my phone or the television when playing with my child? What are some adult "tech-free times" I can set for myself and for the family?