

Establishing Healthy Screen Time Habits

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- ✚ Avoid using screen time as a digital babysitter or as a self-regulation tool to get your child to calm down/stop crying
- ✚ Schedule screen-free outings occasionally (such as the zoo, park, or pool)—not every event has to be documented with pictures and videos
- ✚ Help balance screen-based play with toy play, gross motor (muscle building) play, fine motor play, outdoor play, and quiet playtime activities (such as coloring or looking at books)
- ✚ Establish family screen-time rules (here are a few examples: no screens during mealtime...child is allowed 30 minutes of screen time after nap...we turn the screen off when the show is over...no screen time after 7:00 pm...no screens in the toy room or bedroom)
- ✚ Make screen time interactive by talking about what your child is seeing and hearing on the show, app, or video game
- ✚ Don't let your child become dependent on your smartphone or tablet as the primary source of entertainment
- ✚ Be sure to provide plenty of opportunities for play-based movement
- ✚ Avoid having the TV on in the background as it can interfere with language development—turn the TV off when no one is watching
- ✚ Engage in face-to-face interactions by talking, singing, and reading to your child every day (screen time is a one-way transaction that does not support the development of social communication skills)
- ✚ Try not to be digitally distracted; be mindful of your own screen time use—children learn by watching and imitating others (Parents are the first and most important teachers!)
- ✚ Avoid using screens as part of the bedtime routine—reading books before bed is a better option for promoting sleep than screen time