

Recommendations for Screen Time

Tablets, TVs and phones – ‘screens’ are becoming increasingly popular with children. Whilst they can be useful and educational when used correctly, they should not be used to replace interaction as if a child talks to a screen, it can’t talk back.

Recent studies have found that:

1. **Toddlers who were exposed to more handheld screen time were more likely to have delayed expressive language skills.**
2. **Toddlers who watched more videos said fewer words.**

To make the most of screens and technology, they should be used as tools to help engage your child in language-filled interactions.



Top Tips for getting the most from screens:

- Try to limit screen time to around 30 minutes per day
- Use screen time as a platform for interaction – share time with your child when they are playing or watching, talking about what is happening e.g. ‘she’s **running**’ and commenting on what you can see e.g. ‘that’s a big red car’
- Only have the TV on when you are watching it together – turn it off so that it is not ‘background noise’
- Use your phone or tablet to take pictures of your child playing and then look at them together, engaging them in conversation about what they were doing ‘I took some pictures of you building! What were you building?’
- Watch musical videos such as nursery rhymes that you and your children can sing together without the screen
- For older children, watching together can provide opportunities for developing prediction skills by asking ‘what do you think will happen next?’ and inference skills ‘why do you think he feels angry?’
- Encourage vocabulary development by looking up the meanings of new words together online.

American Academy of Pediatrics (2017). Handheld Screen Time Linked with Speech Delays in Young Children. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/news/Pages/Handheld-Screen-Time-Linked-with-Speech-Delays-in-Young-Children.aspx>

Zimmerman, F. J., Christakis, D. A. & Meltzoff, A. N. (2007). Associations between Media Viewing and Language Development in Children Under Age 2 Years. The Journal of Pediatrics, 151, 364-368.