

# Technology Use for Children: A Caregiver Guide

**Be a good role model in your own technology use.** Monitor your technology use habits, and be conscious of your own screen time. Set limits in order to make space for real-life connections with those around you, especially when engaging with your child(ren).

## Set limits:

- Set clear screen time limits in your home and make sure that screen time is not interfering with sleep time. Set an “off media” time of 9pm for the whole family.
- Establish “screen free” times such as during family meals.
- Clearly define rules about what your child can watch/play to make sure that the content is age and developmentally appropriate.
- Whenever possible, technology should be used in shared/public spaces where it can be monitored by an adult.

## The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommends:<sup>1</sup>

Under 18 months	No screen time
18 - 24 months	Limited, educational programming consumed with a caregiver
Ages 2-5	Limit of one hour per day of high quality programming
Ages 5+	Make a plan for screen time together with your child. <a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/family-media-plan">Healthychildren.org</a> offers a free, online template for making a <a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/family-media-plan">Family Media Plan</a> .

**Pay attention.** Research demonstrates that the content that your child consumes can have a significant impact on their behavior and mental health. If their behavior shifts after watching a show or playing a video game (such as an increase in aggressive behaviors), you should have a conversation with your child about this and then set limits around that type of content.

- [Commonsensemedia.org](https://www.common sense media.org) is a helpful resource for caregivers around media consumption. It includes specific reviews of shows, movies, and video games so that you can better understand what your child is consuming.
- Watch shows or play video games with your child so that you can monitor what they are seeing, ask questions, and engage them critically in the content.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [commonsensemedia.org](https://www.common sense media.org)

### What is the purpose of the screen time?

It can be helpful to have a nuanced conversation in your family about screen time. Not all screen time has the same function; mindlessly binge watching a show is different than playing a game online with a known friend or engaging with interactive, educational content. Have conversations in your home around your values and how this intersects with the kinds of media that you consume. **Try not to use technology as a reward or as a strategy to soothe difficult emotions.**

### Teach your child how to be safe online. Emphasize the following key rules for online safety:

- don't talk to or plan to meet up with strangers;
- don't share personal information online;
- speak/post online in a way that is kind and consistent with your family's values;
- and tell an adult immediately about cyber bullying or unsafe behaviors online.

### References & Helpful Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021, June 4). *Media and Children*. Media & Children. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/media-and-children/>

Common Sense Media. (2022, March 11). *How much screen time is OK for my kid(s)?* Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/how-much-screen-time-is-ok-for-my-kids>

Krongard, S. (2021, August 6). *Parents: Time to rethink your child's relationship with Screen Time*. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/21/08/parents-time-rethink-your-child%E2%80%99s-relationship-screen-time>



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