

Tips for Building Healthy Screen Habits

Screens are part of modern life, and sometimes they can even feel like a lifeline. But when it comes to young children, **real-world interactions are what help their brains grow best.**

Too much screen time can get in the way of play, conversation, and sleep. Reducing screen time isn't about punishment, it's about making room for more connection, creativity, and calm. By taking small, thoughtful steps, you will help your child build healthy habits that last a lifetime...

✓ Save Screens for You

If you need to use a screen, maybe to send a message, check the news, or to have a breather, that's okay. Just **try to avoid using them when you're playing, feeding, or winding down for sleep.** Your child's brain is wired to learn from you.

✓ Create Quiet, Screen-Free Moments

Try to keep mealtimes, bedtime, and bedtime screen-free, for both you and baby. These quiet, tech-free moments help babies feel calm and safe, and they strengthen your bond. **Try to not take out screens in public spaces, such as at a restaurant.** You can use free resources public spaces offer or try our #46 Wonderful Waiting Games instead!

✓ Go Outside When You Can

Fresh air and natural light are great for your child and for you too. **Being outside boosts everyone's mood** and gives children a chance to explore, move, and be curious.

✓ Talk and Sing (Even If It Feels Silly)

Your baby is listening and learning, even when they're very young. Narrate what you're doing, sing simple songs, or tell them about your day. These **small moments are powerful** for early language and bonding.

Advice from the World Health Organisation:

0 to 2 years old

Screen time is not recommended.

2 to 3 years old

No more than an hour a day for 2-year-olds, with less time preferred.

3 to 4 years old

No more than one hour a day.

✓ Keep It Face-to-Face

Babies learn through eye contact, smiles, and hearing your voice. **Whenever possible, choose face-to-face time over screen time, even if it's just a few quiet minutes while changing a nappy or feeding.**

Keep phones and tablets out of your child's reach during playtime so they stay focused on faces, and exploring.

A blanket on the floor with a few simple objects is more than enough to engage their growing mind!



✓ Be Realistic

Change doesn't have to happen overnight.

If your child currently has a lot of screen time, start by reducing screen time just a little, maybe by 15 or 30 minutes a day before working toward the recommended one hour per day.

Small changes are easier for everyone. Small, steady steps are easier to manage and more likely to stick!

✓ Be Accountable

Start by setting clear expectations with your children. **Talk openly about screen time,** and work together to create goals. Many devices have built-in features to help you set daily time limits, use them to encourage healthier habits.

Talk as a family (even with toddlers!) about when and why you use screens. Together, you can agree on a few simple limits. Most phones and tablets have settings that let you set time limits, it can be a helpful tool, especially during busy days.