



# STEP AWAY FROM THE SCREENS

Human interaction is essential for speech and language development. Because the brains of young children develop rapidly during their first years and they learn best by interacting with people, it is important that parents limit their children's technology use.

*According to the Urban Child Institute, there are other good reasons to limit your child's technology use:*

- Technology use can limit conversation and interaction that is crucial for vocabulary growth in young children. Studies have proven that there is a link between the number and variety of words a child hears and later success in school.
- Watching lots of television can lead to weaker language skills.
- Screen time, especially before bedtime, can interfere with sleep.
- Relying on technology for entertainment limits time for important creative play which has a crucial role in language and brain development.

*Tips to manage your child's use of technology and create meaningful alternatives to screen time:*

1. Choose toys that inspire creativity. Age-appropriate craft supplies, dress-up props, and building blocks keep children busy and engage them in make-believe play.
2. Include your child in daily chores. Young children readily imitate adults. Offer your child opportunities to participate in daily tasks such as sorting laundry, dusting furniture, or watering plants.
3. Reading and sharing stories is not just for bedtime. Consider reading or telling stories to your child during the daytime too. Shared stories help children learn early sequencing, vocabulary, and grammar skills.
4. Get on the floor and play with your child. Children learn important social skills such as turn-taking, sharing, and conversation from joint play activities. Playing with your child also gives you the opportunity to communicate with your child and model good language skills.
5. Let your child get dirty! Outdoor play helps young children develop gross motor skills and provides opportunities for encounters they can't have in an indoor environment. Play in the backyard, visit a local park, or find a playgroup.
6. Turn off the TV and other tech devices. In many homes, the television is on in the background. Studies indicate that background TV noise can interfere with a child's ability to concentrate. Background TV noise and use of other technology devices also lowers the quantity and quality of family interactions. Turning off the TV and other devices limits distractions and provides opportunities for family members to talk to one another.
7. Make tech use a family activity. When you do allow your child to use technology, use the device together and talk about your shared experiences.
8. Model good tech habits for your child. Children learn from watching the adults around them. Practice the tech habits you want your child to use. Little eyes are always watching. ✨

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