



Digital Media and Your Kids: Frequently Asked Questions

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One of the great debates of parenting today is whether screen time and digital media helps or harms our kids. There's no shortage of articles on the net about screen time and our children, many of which are merely opinions shared on mommy blogging sites. So what are the facts, and what does it mean for our kids and their beloved videos and apps?



We've written an article about screen time before, but here we'll answer some of the most frequently asked questions that parents have when it comes to digital media and their kids.

Is screen time bad for my kids?

This is a common misconception amongst parents. Screen time isn't necessarily bad, but it's important to choose quality programming for your child. Just like with food, there are plenty of healthy and unhealthy choices to make when it comes to screen time. In the world of digital media, parents can find anything from Youtube videos, video games, to meaningful learning activities for kids to enrich their education.

And not all Youtube videos are made the same: some could be mindless media candy, while others can be used as a technique to teach ABC's to a squirmy toddler. The bottom line is that screen time is not inherently bad for children, but just like anything else, it's up to the parent to choose the best content for their kids. When parents pick worthwhile media for their kids, screen time can indeed be used as a positive force to teach children the skills they need to be successful in school and life. Learn [how to use media wisely in early years](#).

What type of media is best for young children?

This depends on the age of your children. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), screen time should be limited under the age of 2, but starting around 15 months old, children in studies have the ability to learn words, especially when interacting with an adult through video-chatting, or through a learning program or app designed to teach kids language.

- For toddlers, video chats and early language apps are best.
- For preschoolers and kindergartners, there's a plethora of learning apps, like those that include matching games for kids; but it's important to find quality games and videos, and to play along with your child, since kids learn best when interacting socially.



How much screen time is too much?

Since screen time can be an important educational enhancement for your child, there's no need to cut it out of the daily routine. However, it should be limited so kids have ample time to interact with friends, caregivers, and to take part in activities that are more hands-on.

With this said, the AAP also recommends that kids between the ages of 2 and 5 spend no more than an hour a day with digital media. Beyond this hour, children may be missing out on other important learning experiences. Simply put, screen time becomes too much when it takes away from other meaningful activities.

Should I use screen time to keep my child busy or calm?

Screen time for little ones should be limited to educationally enriching content, but that doesn't mean that there won't be a time when you turn to a trusted app to keep your child busy when something important comes up that demands your attention.

The important thing is that as a parent, turning to screen time shouldn't be the only tool you use to keep your child busy. It's important to develop many techniques to calm your child, and to especially teach your child appropriate emotional regulation and control. Screen time, like anything else, should be used in mindful moderation.

What kind of rules are appropriate for managing kids' screen time?

Balance is key, and to achieve the perfect balance for your child, it's important to sit down and create your family's rules and boundaries when it comes to digital media. The [AAP's media plan tool](#) can help you learn about how to create and enforce healthy limits for your kids.

This tool will help you to create a plan that works for your family. In general, it will help you to think about setting media-free times throughout the day, designate rooms of your house as on or off limits for screen time, and think about how to conduct oneself online, and the general rules you'll set for your kids when they are using the internet.

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Variety is the spice of life, and just like the foods your kids eat, balance and moderation is key. When used in conjunction with an array of other worthwhile social and interactive hands-on activities, digital media can serve as important educational tools to enhance your child's learning. That said, don't forget that Kids Academy offers engaging off-

screen activities for your kids, like free printable math worksheets to promote varied and balanced educational opportunities. Check out all that we have to offer, and get working on that family media plan to make the most out of your child's everyday learning experiences!

