



How to Use Media Wisely in Early Years?

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Last month, you may have heard in the news that the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) announced changes to their recommendations for screen time amongst young children. Previously, the AAP denounced the use of internet and mobile media for children under the age of two, recommending that children only be introduced to such media during their preschool years.

Obviously, there's a wealth of high-quality educational apps for preschoolers available to toddlers, and it's wonderful to see the AAP finally realize the educational benefits of quality media, such as the apps you find right here at Kids Academy. Keep reading to learn just what the AAP recommends, and how to determine the best use of quality screen time for your children.

The Good and the Bad

It's refreshing to see such an influential organization such as the American Academy of Pediatrics realize the benefits and necessity of children learning through screen media. Many of us have seen first-hand how screen media can enhance the learning of our children; but now that the AAP is following suit in their recommendations, it validates the idea that what many of have already been doing contributes to a strong educational foundation for our kids.

There is now solid research into the idea that screen media does in fact benefit children in a beneficial and educational way. [Educational apps for preschoolers](#) are here to stay, and are ever-more important than ever before.

Screen Time for 18 to 24 Months

It's important to note that the AAP still recommends limiting the use of screen time to children ages 0-17 months to merely video chatting with family members. Let's face it: most of us aren't trying to teach our 3-month olds to read, with good reason. However, it's an entirely different story for toddlers. The AAP now suggests introducing screen media to toddlers at 18 months and recommends the following:

- > Creating a family media use plan

As a parent, discuss and teach the rules your family sees fit when it comes to when and where toddlers can access media. For instance, you might teach your child that phones and tablets must not be present during meal times or during the bedtime routine.

- > Choosing high-quality apps

There are many apps available in the Apps Store, but how do you know which ones to choose? Select apps from a company you trust, look for apps that are developed by experts in childhood education, and most importantly, try out the app yourself before allowing your child to play.

- > Limiting screen time to 1 hour

You get to decide just when your child gets screen time. Think about your daily schedule to determine when it would best fit in. Choose a time that you are also available.

- > Playing along with your child

Reinforce the skills the app is trying to teach by playing along with your child and explaining what they are doing each step of the way.



What about Preschoolers?

Previously, the AAP recommended that preschoolers be introduced to media after children turn two years old. Truthfully, the recommendations for preschoolers haven't changed much. Here's how the recommendations for older children differ:

- > Choosing quality content together to allow for high-interest choices.
- > With more apps to choose from, avoid fast-paced, distracting, or violent games.
- > Keep a watchful eye on older children.

As children grow older, the ways that screen media can be used for educational purposes multiply.

One fast-emerging technology in the app world is augmented reality, which allows older children the ability to connect learning to the real world, or complete tasks and receive instant feedback.

With so many educationally-rich choices to choose from, it's obvious that kids benefit from media in many ways. The recommendation by the AAP primarily preaches common sense in its use regarding the types of content offered to children, and when, where, and how to use it.

The Takeaway

Many parents are already doing the above every day, but it is assuring that the AAP is now recommending what many of us have been doing all along in our pursuit as parents to give our child the very best beginnings in life.

