Digital Media and Your Young Child (age 0-5)

American Academy of Pediatrics: Digital Media Guidelines

Age	Recommendation
< 18 months	No screen media other than video-chatting.
18-24 months	For parents who would like to introduce digital media – ensure high quality programming and shared use between parents and child.
2-5 years	No more than 1 hour per day of high-quality programming and shared use between parents and child.

Health Effects of Excessive Media Use

- Sleep: Media use in the bedroom/evening is associated with fewer minutes of sleep.

- Obesity: Increase in BMI for every hour per week of media consumed.

- Development: Early excessive TV viewing is associated with cognitive, language, and social/emotional delays and problems with concentration later in life.

- Parent-child Interactions: Background TV and heavy parent mobile device use distracts from verbal and nonverbal parent-child interactions.

Guide to Media Use in 2 – 5 year-olds

- Use media with your child to help them understand what they are seeing and apply what they learn to the world around them.

- Choose high-quality programming. Monitor children's media content and apps being used and downloaded by testing/viewing before your child, watching/using together and asking your child what they think about the show/app.

- Avoid fast-paced programs, apps with lots of distracting content, and violence.

- Do not feel pressured to introduce technology early. Interfaces are intuitive and children learn to use them quickly.

- Keep bedtimes, mealtimes, and parent-child play times screen free for children and parents. No screens 1 hour before bedtime and remove all devices from bedrooms before bed.

- Turn off all television and other devices when not in use.

- Avoid using digital media as the only way to calm your child.

- Create unplugged spaces and times in the home.

- **Create a family media plan and ask all caregivers to adhere to it when with your child.** https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx

High Quality Programming

Not all media is bad and can be used in positive ways to promote interaction, connection, and creativity. Be aware that many shows/apps claim to be educational or interactive but research has not demonstrated their quality. Use resources such as these to find high-quality and age-appropriate programming.

Digital Media Research and Resources for Your Family

- Zero to Three – report on using media with young children in a meaningful way to support development: https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2536-what-the-research-says-about-the-impact-of-media-on-children-aged-0-3-years-old

- Healthy Children: https://www.healthychildren.org/english/family-life/media/pages/default.aspx

- Digital media use guidelines: https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/digital-guidelines.aspx

- Family Online Safety Institute: https://www.fosi.org/

- National Association of Media Literacy's Free Guide for Parents: https://namle.net/a-parents-guide/

- Research on health effects of screen time: http://www.screenfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/screentimefs.pdf

- Screenagers and Tech Talk Tuesday: https://www.screenagersmovie.com/tech-talk-tuesdays/

- Wait Until 8th: https://www.waituntil8th.org/

- American Psychological Association: https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/digital-guidelines.aspx

- Parent Social Media Posting: https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/07-08/social-media.aspx

- OECD Digital Media and Mental Health Report: http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Children-and-Young-People-Mental-Health-in-the-Digital-Age.pdf

*Information on this handout is from the most recent guidelines published by the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement "Media and Young Minds" http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591