



YOUNG CHILDREN AND SCREENS:

Putting Parents in the Driver's Seat



Introducing young children to screens puts **you** in the driver's seat. When you share a television show, video chat, game, app, or e-book with your baby or toddler, use these strategies to make early screen experiences learning experiences for your child:

View, play, or engage in the screen experience *with* your child. The research shows children under-5 are often alone during screen time. Think about screen time like learning to drive. Young children need an experienced adult there to make sense of what they're seeing and doing on screens.



Talk about what your child is doing and discovering. Label objects and people on-screen, ask questions, respond to your child's comments, and sing along to songs on-screen.



Make connections to your child's everyday life: *See how the game has you counting apples? We bought apples at the supermarket today.*

Encourage your child to use skills learned on screens in the "real world." Does your child play a matching game on a tablet or phone app? Play together, then give your child a chance to use these skills in the real world by playing Memory or by matching socks while folding laundry.



Set limits on screen use. Young children learn best by playing and interacting in the real world. Also, avoid using screens as a reward or as a way to help children recover from tantrums or emotional upset.



Be a role model for screen use. Show your child how to put screens aside and focus on time together as a family. Silence your phone while you're spending time with your child so you can focus on each other.

