

HELPING YOUR CHILD THRIVE IN THE EARLY YEARS



BY REDUCING SCREEN TIME

You are not to blame

Phones and tablets are everywhere, and they are designed to grab attention. But did you know that too much screen time - for both parents and children - can make it harder for little ones to develop key skills they need to **grow, learn, and connect**?

Why this matters

In the first five years, your child's brain is growing faster than it ever will again. These years lay the foundation for how they think, move, talk, and build relationships, which are important for being ready for school.

Too much screen time can:

- 1 Delay speech and communication**
Young children learn to talk by hearing real voices and taking part in conversations. Screens often reduce these important moments of connection.
- 2 Make it harder to handle emotions**
If screens are used often to calm a child down, they may miss out on learning how to cope with frustration, boredom or big feelings in other ways.
- 3 Impact feeding**
Screen use during feeding can make it harder for babies to connect with their parents and for their needs to be noticed. It can also affect how children learn to try new foods and recognise when they're hungry or full.
- 4 Reduce active play**
Children need to move, use their hands, and explore. Long periods of screen time can limit this, affecting coordination, strength and posture.
- 5 Impact focus and attention**
Fast-moving videos can make it harder for children to focus on slower, real-life tasks, such as playing, reading, or listening.

What can help:

You do not need to do it all at once

Small steps matter. This isn't about guilt, it's about giving your child the best chance to grow and thrive. What your child needs most is you: your attention, your voice, your time.

- 1 Make time for screen-free activities** like play, outdoor time, or reading.
- 2 Keep screens off** during mealtimes and before bed.
- 3 Watch or play alongside** your child when screens are used - this helps support learning.
- 4 Keep screens out of bedrooms** overnight - yours too, if possible.
- 5 Be a role model** - children copy how adults use phones and tablets.



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