

TALK
& PLAY

EVERY
DAY

Switch it off & talk together
A helpful guide to early language development



Switch it off & talk together

Digital and screen based technology such as mobile phones, computers, games consoles, tablets and TVs are now part of everyday life.

However, we know children learn language best by playing and talking to their parents, carers and siblings, rather than from screen based entertainment such as TV.



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What to do...

TV

Guidance does not recommend television for children under 2. It has limited educational benefit and takes away time they need to develop their skills through play and talking to other people. (National Literacy Trust 2004)

2-5 year olds should watch screens for no more than 1-2 hours a day. (American Association of Paediatrics)

Watching too much TV, computer games or other 'screen' based entertainment means there is less opportunity for children to interact with other people and play.

Computer games

Playing computer games can develop your child's thinking and problem solving skills, co-ordination and spatial awareness.

But spending too much time playing computer games can affect a child's longer term attention skills and be 'addictive' so the child doesn't do the other types of activities that help their learning.

TV

Pick programmes that are meant for children, are educational, and use language at a similar level to the language your child uses.

Watch with them to help them understand and use new words and talk about what is happening in the programmes.

Limit the overall time spent watching screens and do other things instead such as reading or playing with your child.

Be aware of what your child is watching. If there are older siblings watching, be aware programmes they prefer may not be suitable for children between 2-5 years.

It's not recommended that children watch general or adult TV.

Computer games

Pick games suitable for your child's age and ideally games where the child has to make decisions, solve problems, plan and where other people can play.

Limit how much time your child spends playing games and watching screens in total so that they have time to do other things.

Did you know?



How to get the most out of...



Did you know?



How to get the most out of...



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TOP TIPS

- Limit the total time your child spends looking at screens such as phones, iPads, computers, TV and computer games.
- Make sure that what your child is watching on 'screens' is appropriate for his/her age.
- Talk to your child during the day about what you are both doing and what you can see to help him or her learn more words and express themselves.



HINT

Be aware of how much time **you** spend looking at your phone or other screens. Make sure there are times when you turn off your phone or screen so you don't miss out on talking to your children. This is time you could use to help your child's language develop by talking and listening to them.

Further advice and information is available from your local speech and language therapist, health visitor or Children's Centre.

'Talk and Play Every Day' are a series of leaflets written and developed by Guy's & St Thomas' Children & Young People's Community Speech & Language Therapy Service