

[IMAGE]

Why Too Much Screen Time Is Bad for Your Young Child's Brain

By Editorial Staff

Excessive screen time may be "associated with differences in the structural integrity of brain white matter tracts that support language and literacy skills in preschool-aged children," according to research. What's considered "excessive" when it comes to screen time? Per the study, findings from which appear in the research journal *Pediatrics*, more than one hour per day of non-quality screen time impacts brain "tracts involved with language, executive function, and emergent literacy abilities" in this age group.

Current American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines recommend a limit of one hour or less of high-quality educational programming per day for children ages 2-5. The AAP excludes "quality time interacting with others" from the screen-time limit (e.g., video chatting with grandparents or other family friends).

One hour or less a day? If you're wondering how you can possibly keep your child away from the screen - any screen - for that amount of time every day, here are some tips from [the AAP](#) that may help:

- "Be with young kids during screen time and interact with them. That can mean playing an educational game with your child or talking about something you see together in an age-appropriate TV show or video.
- Research games and apps before getting them for your child. Thousands of apps and games claim to be educational, but not all of them are. Search online to see which ones educators and doctors consider the best. When possible, preview before sharing with your child.
- Schedule plenty of non-screen time into your child's day. Playtime is important for learning and building creativity. Preschoolers should have time to play away from screens every day. Schedule lots of time for hands-on learning and interacting with caregivers and friends. Also, make sure your child is physically active every day and gets plenty of sleep.
- Turn off screens during meals and at least 1 hour before bed. Keep TVs and other electronics out of kids' bedrooms.
- Set a good example. Turn off TVs and other screens when not in use. Don't leave screens on in the

background. Turn off or mute your phone when you're not using it, like during family meals, and make time to focus on playing with your child."

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