

About Us

Everything we learn about child development is made possible by the participation of families like yours.

The Infant and Child Studies Consortium is a research group at the University of Maryland's flagship campus studying child development in the areas of hearing and speech science, human development, linguistics, and psychology. Our research relies on the generous participation of local families. Sign up with us today on our website or by phone or email!

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Making the Most of Media

How to support your child's development



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References

Lerner, C., & Barr, R. (2014). Screen Sense Key Findings. Retrieved April 05, 2017, from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/385-screen-sense-key-findings>
Zerotothree.org – Resources for parents, including screen time recommendations
Commonsensemedia.org – Reviews and recommendations of children's TV shows, movies, and other media



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INFANT AND CHILD STUDIES

We interact with digital media daily in the 21st century and it has undoubtedly affected how we raise our children. The researchers at the University of Maryland Infant and Child Studies Consortium have compiled tips for good media practices, not only to protect your child from harmful media exposure but also to help you make the most of media your child does see.

Choose Content Carefully

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 2-5 years old use screen media for an hour or less per day. Research from our consortium suggests that children who watch more hours of TV per day have lower vocabulary scores, further supporting the notion of limiting time spent watching screen media.

When your child does watch media, choose content carefully. Not all media choices provide the same opportunity for learning—media choices matter!



Select media that...

Is age appropriate. Watching media meant for adults won't make your young child think or act like an adult. Media created for young children have more focused content better suited for your child's developmental stage.

Contains a relatable theme for your child. This will not only interest your child more, but can be a valuable resource if you wish to help your child develop communication skills or instill a life lesson.

Follows clear story lines, which are easier for children to understand, and are a better vehicle for learning.

Talk With Your Child and Watch Actively

Make your child's screen experiences **interactive** and **language-rich**! Pausing and taking time to talk helps your child's learning go far beyond what media alone can offer.

Repeat vocabulary words. Just hearing a new word more can help kids learn!

Point to and label objects and actions. This is an opportunity to learn new words.

Ask questions. Open-ended questions that require more than single-word answers are great for helping your child focus on the important parts of the story, integrate information, and make inferences.

Move around while you watch. Act out what's happening on-screen!



Make Connections

It is important to help children relate what they see on screen to the real world—kids do not always make those connections easily, and a little help from you can strengthen their learning!

Point out objects in real life that your child saw before on a screen.

Review concepts (such as colors, letters, and emotions) as they come up in everyday life.

Play games together that are similar to ones your child has played on a tablet or phone.

Retell or recreate a story or scene from a show.

Do related **art activities**.

Visit places related to show settings.