DIGITAL FOR LIFE

PLAY IT FORWARD

Set

Ages 6 and below

A Parent's Guide to Your Child's First Screen Use

Keep this in mind before introducing screens to your child:

- Choose age-appropriate content
- Know how excessive screen use can affect your child
- Manage your child's screen use with parental controls

5 Tips to Choose Age-Appropriate Content

Check the Content Rating

Whether it is videos or games, ensure that the content is suitable for your child's age. Refer to IMDA's media classification database and CommonSenseMedia.org for ratings and reviews of a wide range of media.

Uphold Your Family's Beliefs

Look for content that emphasises the values you want your child to embrace, such as respect or empathy.

Pick Positive Content

Choose content that instils positive character traits, respects different opinions, and avoids stereotypes.

Review the Format

Opt for interactive and engaging activities over passive formats such as videos to encourage the development of crucial skills.

Choose Reliable Content

Look for information that values facts, like the fact that the Earth orbits the sun (and not the other way around!)

Before introducing an app to your child, always read reviews and try it for yourself first.

How Excessive Screen Use Can Affect Your Child

- Slower language development and shorter attention span
- Higher chances of developing myopia, eye strain, and dry eyes
- Difficulty sleeping peacefully at night
- Increased risk of obesity with a sedentary lifestyle

5 Tips to Manage Your Child's Screen Use

1 Lead by Example

Be a Role Model and show them that there are plenty of fun things to do without screens.

2 Introduce a Countdown

Help your child "switch off" more easily by giving them a heads-up, such as a 5-minute reminder before they need to stop. Be patient, because they might not always get it right at this age.

3 Monitor and Limit Screen Use

Set your child's screen use limits using parental controls. Use MOH's Guidance on Screen Use to determine the suitable amount of screen use for your child.

Remember, for children under 18 months, no screen use is recommended, except for video chatting!

4 Promote a Healthy Lifestyle

Guide your child towards a healthy and balanced lifestyle by promoting physical activity and healthy eating habits. This means no screen use during mealtimes!

5 Take a Break from Tech

Spend screen-free moments as a family. Put away devices during meals and have some offline fun like going to the park or playing board games.

Screens can be a fun learning tool, but they can also lead to isolation and addiction. The best time to set limits is at your child's very first screen use. By guiding them early, you're helping your child develop safe and healthy digital habits before their behaviour becomes harder to shape.

Visit www.digitalforlife.gov.sg for simple tips and tools to keep your child safe online.