

### Other tips to help support your child's use of TV tablets and devices

Make sure you check out programmes and apps BEFORE your child sees them – they should be at an appropriate level for your child's development as well as being safe.

**Treat 'free apps' with caution. Some will expose your child to lots of adverts or ask for online payments.**



**Some YouTube clips viewed may not be suitable for your child as they contain favourite known characters from TV programs, but are adult in their content.**

Skype, Facetime and other video messaging services can provide great opportunities for your child to develop their listening, attention and speaking skills.

### References

- [www.wordsforlife.org.uk](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/babies-and-screen-time](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/babies-and-screen-time)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3tsyrd](http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3tsyrd)
- [www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jan/08/are-tablet-computers-bad-young-children](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jan/08/are-tablet-computers-bad-young-children)
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/schemas> Useful Information about a current CBeebies programme (E.G. The Twirlywoos) that supports children's developing communication skills

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Helping Children Communicate



With Their World

# USING TV AND TABLETS

Accessing TV and other devices is part of everyday routines in most households now and can offer education, fun and family shared experience. **By using tablets together with parental guidance, this can develop and support your child's attention, understanding of vocabulary and talking.**

Toddlers gradually gain basic skills by turning things on and soon learn how to use a touch screen. Often a child's next steps will be to make toys work by pressing parts or lifting flaps to make things happen. They begin to learn that devices hold



information and will be able to sing along with a song or watch something on a TV, computer, tablet or phone.

**Too much close up screen time before bedtime can cause difficulties with sleeping because of the light they emit.**

Here are some suggestions for making the best use of the TV and other screen time whilst encouraging your child to learn to listen, process what is being said and communicate with those around them.

### How much television should your child watch?

Make sure that your child watches age appropriate programmes. For under twos consider programmes that have short stories that are easy to follow, with a single presenter so that they are tuning into just one person at a time. For three to five year olds consider programmes where they can participate with verbal responses—this might mean setting TV times aside for different age siblings.

However, too much television can affect your child's ability to talk, listen and concentrate. Watching TV involves one-way communication your child is passive and can 'switch off' from what they are viewing. Two-way communication, on the other hand, where your child is interacting with somebody, requires them to listen, express themselves and helps to develop their communication and social skills. Make sure the time your child spends playing with technology is also balanced with other activities, such as playing outside, with puzzles or other toys. Try to limit screen time to half an hour for under twos and one hour a day for two to fives.

### What can you do to make TV beneficial?

Many young children have a bank of knowledge and words that they want to express, but they aren't able to yet put their thoughts into words. This can be really frustrating so using technology to help them get their ideas across is beneficial. Getting them to point to pictures when you are looking at games or apps together can be a way of getting your child to show you what they want or like.

Where possible try and watch programmes/ DVDs together, show a shared interest and talk about what you've seen afterwards as this will lead to more conversation. When the programme has finished, switch off the TV and talk about what happened in the story or sing songs from the show.

If your child has toys related to a programme, encourage imaginative play when the TV is switched off.

### Should your child have a TV/Tablet in his or her bedroom?

Giving your child a TV or tablet for their bedroom gives you less control over what they watch, increasing the likelihood of inappropriate viewing. Your child is more likely to watch alone, unable to talk about what they have seen or ask questions if confused. Too much screen time, which is more likely if your child has their own set, reduces time for activities like play, reading books and talking. There is also a risk that your child will become dependent on having the screen on before they can drift off to sleep.

### Are DVDs better than TV?

DVDs can be better than television as the repetition and familiarity of words and phrases makes it easier for children to learn from them. Watching the same material may seem boring for an adult but it is good for reinforcing a child's understanding of the content and their

imaginary play skills. Ask your child what they are looking at and show that you're listening to their answer.



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### What should I avoid?

Leaving the TV on when no one is watching. Constant background noise is a distraction from talking and listening to each other.