



Children & Technology: Tips for Parents



Tip #1: Knowing the general guidelines for kids' screen time

- The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends **no screen time at all** for children under the age of 18 months
- Children age 5 are allowed a **maximum of 1 hour a day** of high quality programs.
- There's no suggested number of hours for children aged 6 and up, but a sensible upper limit would be **90 mins**.



Tip #2: Set parental control

- Arm yourself with facts - get to know the PEGI Rating, and learn how to use your console's parental controls
(Phone, Tablets, Xbox, PS4 and Nintendo Switch all have them).
- Trust your instincts when it comes to what's right for them.
Managing your kids' gaming comes down to a combination of making informed and considered decisions.



Tip #3: Screen time shouldn't always be alone time.

- Play a video game with your kids. Demonstrate good sportsmanship and gaming etiquette.

Co-view, co-play and co-engage with your children when they are using screens—it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning.



Tip #4: Discuss online safety

- Discuss staying safe online.

Talk about things like not downloading suspicious files disguised as cheats, as well as the risks of oversharing and contact with strangers.

- Lots of games have moderators and tools for blocking/reporting.

Teach your child what they are and how to use them.



Tip #5: Encourage open communication

- Make sure your child knows they can talk to you if they're ever worried or upset by anything.

If they do come to you with a concern, try to resist banning games completely – this can feel like a punishment and discourage asking for help.

Do not judge, but seek to understand.



Tip #6: Negotiating screen time

- Have an agreed time limit at the start of the session.

Give them a 5 minute warning before the time is up, so they have a chance to save their progress. Be firm, but reasonable; if they really do need just 1 more minute to finish the match or beat the boss, show magnanimity.

- Following that, tell them that every minute they spend playing after the time limit expires will cost them 5 minutes of their next session.



Q&A: What is gaming disorder

Gaming disorder is characterized by a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour, which may be online or offline, manifested by impaired control over gaming:-

AND increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities;

AND continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences or behavior that affects one's relationships, education, or occupation.

- There needs to be sufficient severity that results in impairment of function such as neglect of personal hygiene and studies, not fulfilling the role as a child in the family evidently over a period of **12 months**.

NOTE: Only a minority of gamers have a gaming disorder, hence we should **not** generalise that all gamers have a problem.



Q&A: Why is it important to manage your child's game exposure?

- Children are more vulnerable to influence and manipulation of video games because their pre-frontal cortex are not fully developed.

That explains why children have relatively poor impulse control and decision making skills.

- When trying to decide if a game is appropriate for your child, the PEGI rating is a good place to start. Have a look at the descriptors that come with the rating for more detail.

If you're still not sure, it might be worth reading some reviews or having a go yourself to see what's involved.



Q&A: How can I displace screen time?

DISPLACE TECHNOLOGY & REPLACE WITH ACTIVITIES THAT MEET NEEDS – S.P.O.I.L THEM DAILY

SOCIAL: Spending undistracted time with child daily helps to build connectedness. Social learning occurs during early relationship e.g. learning cooperation, empathy and perspective –taking.

PLAY: Free and imaginative play requires children to think about things that are not concretely present and plan ahead. Also trains children in inhibiting impulses and sustaining attention.

OUTDOOR: Benefits mental and physical health

INDEPENDENT: Independent work helps children feel accomplished. Ideally engrossing activities that keep them busy and require simple instruction.

LITERACY: Activities that help a child enjoy reading and writing e.g. reading to child, trips to the library.