

Screen time, technology and language development

Speak Up Salford



All about Children's Speech, Language and Communication



Family
Hub

Salford

Integrated Care Partnership



Screen time, technology and language development

Screen time is any time that a child might spend looking at a screen. This can include televisions, tablets and mobile phones.

Technology is part of our lives now. We can all get distracted by screens. Think about how often you look at your phone each day. Being distracted by our screens can mean we miss our children's communication attempts.

Activities linked to this

- Try to make time for playing and talking together each day.
- Try to have device free times of day, e.g. device free dinners
- Use car journeys for singing and talking rather than DVDs and phones.
- Read a bed time story instead of using the television to help children fall asleep.

All of this will help your child as they are learning to talk.

What does the research say?

Your child develops their language by having conversations with people. Children need to see our facial expressions and learn how to take turns by having someone who responds.

The research is telling us that overuse of any type of screen:

- Reduces the number of parent-child interactions as parents might be distracted by their phone.
- Reduces play opportunities which are important for language development as screens can distract us.
- Reduces learning. Children learn less from screens than from people. For example a television cannot respond to your child in the way a person can.
- Causes distractions. Noises in the background from televisions and tablets can be distracting for children. Switching off screens and turning the television off helps your child's concentration.

What to do

The current advice around screen time use is:

- Children under 2 years of age should have no screen time.
- Children between the ages of 2-5 years. No more than 1 hour of high quality programmes per day. High quality programmes would be those that try to engage children by being interactive, e.g. encouraging a child to copy a sign or word.

For further information

www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/health-impacts-screen-time-guide-clinicians-parents



FIVE TO THRIVE

Respond • Cuddle • Relax • Play • Talk

www.speakupsalford.nhs.uk