

# Screen Time for Under 5s

## Guidance for parents and carers

### How much screen time?

**Under 2 years:** Avoid screens except for shared activities with family that encourage bonding, interaction and conversation

**2-5 years:** Try to keep it to 1 hour per day. Less if possible

### Choose better content

**Slow-paced**, predictable shows are better for young brains

**Avoid** social media and AI tools, toys and chatbots for young children

**Use** parental controls to block harmful content

### When and where?

**Never alone:** Watch together and talk about what you see

**Screen-free zones:** Keep bedrooms and mealtimes screen-free

**No background TV** during play, meals or family time

### Your screen use matters

**Lead by example:** children copy your habits

**Being on your phone** makes it harder to notice what your child needs

**Put your phone away** during quality time together

### Why it matters

**90% of brain growth** happens before age 5

**Too much screen time** can affect language, sleep, eyesight and healthy weight

**Play, reading and conversation** build the foundations for life

### Children with SEND

**A tailored approach** may be needed - assistive tech can be valuable

**Still protect time** for screen-free play, sleep and interaction

### Screen swaps

**Mealtimes** > background music, colouring, 'I Spy', conversation

**Bedtime** > read stories together. Avoid screens for 1 hour before bed

