

Thinking About Screen Use: Birth to 18 Months



Your baby's biggest job is to connect with you and learn from you. Through everyday moments, your baby learns who loves and cares for them.

They learn about the world by touching, mouthing, and grabbing. They learn how to roll, crawl, walk, and more. They learn words and how to communicate.

Babies learn when you talk to them. They learn when you play with them. They learn when you respond to them. Screens can't help with this learning. Only people can!

Wondering about screen use with your baby?

Here's what we know:

1

Babies under 18 months learn very little from screens.

They are not able to connect what's happening on screens to the things they see in real life. When babies are looking at screens, they miss out on things that help them grow. Playing. Moving. Reading. Singing. Spending time with you. Screens can actually get in the way of important learning.

2

Video calls are great screen time experiences. Video calls with friends and family can help your baby build relationships with loved ones. Babies and family members can have back-and-forth conversations or share a book or game together.



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



3

Quality matters. If you choose to use screens, show programs created by educators, like those on PBSKids. Avoid streaming services that include adult content or advertising, like YouTube. Turn off auto-play on streaming services. Keep screen time a very small part of each day.

4

Remember how important you are! Babies learn to calm down when you hold them, soothe them, and talk to them. Screens may distract babies and seem like they are helping with behavior. But screens don't help children learn *how* to calm down or put themselves to sleep. They learn these skills from the soothing and comfort you provide.

5

Be aware of your own screen use. Phones and other screens can be big distractions for adults, too! Staying off screens most of the time helps caregivers notice babies' cues and needs. Turning off screens (like TV) in the background is also a good idea. Background TV can distract babies from important learning.

Make screen-free time together part of your family routine every day.

These moments help your baby learn and feel connected to you.
And part of building a strong family is having fun together!

Have more questions? Talk to your baby's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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