

Toddlers and Technology

Getting the balance right 😊

Technology has many fantastic benefits for children. There is research that children can even learn new things from screens but the same research also tells us that small children learn more efficiently and meaningfully from real life interactions with people and things. Screens can't easily prepare a toddler for the finely tuned, subtle turn taking of interaction in the real world. They can't easily show you what things feel like; they don't usually expect you to respond and they don't usually ask you to listen to them in return! Here are our top tips to getting the balance right and giving children the best opportunities to learn, to play to interact and succeed:

Manage screen time – treat technology as you would any other environment your child spends time in and put limits on it. Grown-ups need to be the ones in charge of screen time. Make sure that you consider ALL the screens your child experiences – television, tablets, smart phones all count!

Your child learns best when YOU are part of their learning! Watch television with them and talk about what you have seen; play games on the iPad together – it will really help them to get the most out of it!

Be aware of background noise. If children are going to learn to talk well then they need to hear what you are saying as clearly as possible and background noise can really get in the way. If you are not watching it or listening to it then turn it off!

Research tells us that as little as two hours screen time a day can increase the risk of sleep difficulties in children. Tired children find it hard to listen and learn. You can help by making bedrooms a no-screen zone and making the last hour before bed time a time for listening to stories and talking rather than watching television.

Try to be a good model yourself. If you don't want them to look at their tablet when you are talking to them then you need to make sure you look at them when they are talking to you! Make some rules for screen use and make sure the grown-ups stick to them too.

Your child will learn best by watching you so encourage them to look at you when you are talking together. Children are great at copying so make sure it is YOU that they are copying!