

Family Digital Plan - from birth to 5



The early years of a child's life are vital for their development and future mental health. A nurturing environment provides a strong foundation that helps them face challenges later on. During this time, they learn essential skills such as language, relationships, trust, love, movement, identity, culture, and emotions. Each moment spent nurturing them contributes to their overall wellbeing. The most important influence in their lives is their caregivers. Children learn from the adults around them, not the screens in front of them.

This plan is for you and anyone else in your home or caring for your child to discuss, agree and plan how your family will approach screens. We have given you some suggestions and tips.

Top Tips from the Health Professionals for Safer Screens



0 - 24 months

Under twos **should not watch screens except when** interacting via video with family or friends.

Children **should not be on social media**. Avoid short-form media such as YouTube Kids - turn off the autoplay so there is no risk of doom scrolling. Choose **high-quality**, age-appropriate TV programming such as CBeebies.



Make sure you know **what your child is using** - they should always be on a screen you can see; the bigger the better,




Be careful with “educational” apps—currently, no one has to prove they are educational. **Limit their usage**, as too much time spent on them has the same impact as using non-educational apps.

Think about how everyone in the family behaves around screens. **Children copy their parents.**

Do not give young children their own devices - **allow access, not ownership.**



1. What devices do we use?

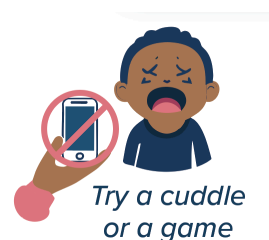
What devices do we use - both adults and children 	What do we like about them 	What don't we like about them 

2. What would you do differently?

What would you like the adults in your family to do differently	What would you like the children in your family to do differently
<div data-bbox="325 1095 395 1167" style="display: inline-block;"></div> <div data-bbox="405 1070 798 1182" style="border: 1px solid orange; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin: 10px 0;"> <i>Reports suggest adults touch their phones over 2000 times a day.</i> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Children learn from their caregivers - they can't learn if they or their parent has a screen in front of them.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>While screens may seem like a good solution to calm a child down, increasing screen time is associated with greater anger and frustration in the long term and a lower ability to manage emotions.</i></p>





Families need to spend time together without screens. Research indicates that both children and adults benefit greatly from chatting, eating, sleeping, and playing together without screens interrupting.



3. Where should we be screen-free?

Creating screen-free zones is an effective way to ensure everyone adheres to the agreement. Devices should never be allowed in bedrooms, as they can disrupt sleep. (Evidence suggests that even having access to them in a bedroom, e.g. in a bedside table drawer can negatively impact sleep almost as much). Additionally, adults should always be aware of what their children do online, so ensure you can see and hear them.

	Could this be screen-free	What could we do instead
Bedrooms	 <p><i>Phones, tablets and computers should not be in any child's room overnight.</i></p>	<p><i>Read bedtime story</i></p> 
In the buggy		
Car		<p><i>Listen to a book or a podcast.</i></p>
Outdoors		
Playground		



4. When should it be screen-free?

Mealtimes can be such a valuable opportunity for connection and togetherness. Taking a break from screens during these moments fosters meaningful conversations and helps us be more mindful of what we're eating. Many families may not realise that eating in front of screens can lead to overeating, which can be concerning. Additionally, creating screen-free time at least an hour before bedtime can make a real difference for our children, helping them to relax and get a better night's sleep. It's all about nurturing those moments that promote well-being for everyone.

When can we agree not to use screens?		What could we do?
Bedtime		
Mealtimes		
Getting ready		
Journey to and from nursery		
Other		
Other		

5. What can we do as a family instead of screens?



Getting outside is a brilliant activity for families. Not only is it fun, but studies show a clear link between excessive screen use and difficulties with concentration, sleep, and mental health. Children must get outside in daylight for at least 76 minutes daily to help protect their eyes from short-sightedness.

What do we pledge that we are going to do differently?

