

# Choosing Media Content for Young Children Using the E-AIMS Model

Looking for media content to make learning fun, yet challenging, for your young one? Use the E-AIMS model to set your sights on programming that is: **E**ngaging, **A**ctively **I**nvolved, **M**eaningful, and **S**ocial<sup>1</sup>



**When choosing content, ask these questions:**

**Is my child Engaged? Is there a learning goal or story as part of the screen experience?**

If **YES**

If **NO**, choose content that has a clear story line or learning goal, like a good e-book or an app that prompts the child to complete a puzzle.

**Is there lots of extra interactivity that doesn't relate to learning?**

If **YES**, look for an experience that focuses on learning—while having fun. Avoid distractions like buttons that take the child outside the story or apps with pop-up ads.

If **NO**

**Is my child Actively Involved? Does she look like she's really thinking about, and participating in, the content?**

If **YES**

If **NO**, look for another experience that seeks responses from your child.

**Is the program, app, or game so familiar that my child is on "autopilot"?**

If **YES**, find a new experience that is more challenging.

If **NO**

**Is the content Meaningful? Does the content reflect my child's everyday life?**

If **YES**

If **NO**, look for experiences that your child can relate to, such as mealtime and playtime. Content with lots of imaginary elements—like a story about aliens doing unfamiliar activities in space—which is hard for a child to understand and learn from.

**Is the content Social? Does this experience encourage my child to talk or respond within the game?**

If **YES**

If **NO**, consider choosing a more interactive screen experience.

**Does this experience encourage my child to interact with me as we play together?**

If **YES**

If **NO**, look for a more socially interactive experience.



**Congratulations—you have chosen a high-quality, fun, and challenging screen experience for your child!**

<sup>1</sup>Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015

## **American Academy of Pediatrics Screen Time Recommendations for Kids 0-5 years Old**

- Avoid digital media use (except video-chatting) in children younger than 18 to 24 months.
- For children ages 18 to 24 months of age, if you want to introduce digital media, choose high-quality programming and use media together with your child. Avoid solo media use in this age group.
- Do not feel pressured to introduce technology early; interfaces are so intuitive that children will figure them out quickly once they start using them at home or in school.
- For children 2 to 5 years of age, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programming, coviev with your children, help children understand what they are seeing, and help them apply what they learn to the world around them.
- Avoid fast-paced programs (young children do not understand them as well), apps with lots of distracting content, and any violent content.
- Turn off televisions and other devices when not in use.
- Avoid using media as the only way to calm your child. Although there are intermittent times (eg, medical procedures, airplane flights) when media is useful as a soothing strategy, there is concern that using media as strategy to calm could lead to problems with limit setting or the inability of children to develop their own emotion regulation. Ask your pediatrician for help if needed.
- Monitor children’s media content and what apps are used or downloaded. Test apps before the child uses them, play together, and ask the child what he or she thinks about the app.
- Keep bedrooms, mealtimes, and parent–child playtimes screen free for children and parents. Parents can set a “do not disturb” option on their phones during these times.
- No screens 1 hour before bedtime, and remove devices from bedrooms before bed.
- Consult the American Academy of Pediatrics Family Media Use Plan, available at: [www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan](http://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan).

### **Websites with More Information**

Common Sense Media	<a href="https://www.commonsensemedia.org/">https://www.commonsensemedia.org/</a>
PBS Parents	<a href="http://www.pbs.org/parents/">http://www.pbs.org/parents/</a>
Zero to Three	<a href="https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/screen-sense">https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/screen-sense</a>