Connecting with your Child in a Digital World

0 – 5 years

Use these 5 strategies to reduce digital interruptions and make room for connection.

Digital media is part of daily family life. While it offers benefits, it can also interrupt interactions between caregivers and children.

Technology-related interruptions are known as "**technoference.**" They can make it harder to notice and respond to your child's cues and needs.

Noticing and responding to children's cues is an important part of responsive caregiving, which is associated with stronger parent-child relationships and positive developmental outcomes.

Notice
Respond
(Re)Connect

1. Notice bids for connection

- Watch for your child's cues, such as looking at you, smiling, babbling, pointing, talking, or asking you to play.
- When possible, put aside your phone and respond with eye contact, words, or affection.

2. Make phone use predictable

- When possible, let your child know when you're using your phone, and when you'll be available again.
- Reconnect after disruptions:
  "Sorry, I was looking at my phone. I'm listening now!"

3. Protect time for connection

- Build in daily screen-free moments, such as meals, feeding, bedtime routines, and playtime.
- Model setting limits and taking breaks from your devices.

4. Use technology to connect, too

- When your child uses digital media, join in by talking, singing along, or responding to what they see. Use video calls to connect with family and friends.

5. Focus on progress, not perfection

- Start with one small change, such as putting your phone away during playtime.
- Remember that small moments of connection add up and help strengthen your relationship with your child.

This guide was informed by evidence from the American Academy of Pediatrics' Digital Ecosystem, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement (2026)

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More digital media guidance: