Practice the 5 Cs of Digital Media Use

0 – 5 years

These 5 questions and tips can help you make decisions about your child's digital media use. Check off each one as you consider your responses.

Child ☐

Does this digital experience fit my child's developmental stage and needs?

> Under 2: Prioritize screen-free play and interaction; video chatting is okay.

> Ages 2–5: Aim for 1 hour or less per day of high-quality screen content, ideally watched with your child.

Content ☐

Is it high-quality and engaging, without harmful content or excessive advertising?

> Watch for platform features that encourage children to keep watching or playing.

> Look for digital experiences that encourage creativity, movement, or interaction

Calm ☐

How does my child feel and behave during and after digital media use?

> Help your child develop ways to manage big feelings without relying on screens.

> Give a warning before screen time ends and help your child transition to another activity.

Communication ☐

Am I watching, playing, or talking with my child about their digital experiences?

> Talk about what you see, or ask:
"What's happening?"
"What do you think about that?"

Crowding Out ☐

Is there still room for sleep, movement, hands-on play, and connection?

> Keep screens out of the bedroom and make time for screen-free moments, such as family meals.

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

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