

Screen Time Safety: Guiding Families Towards Effective Digital Media Use

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Session Agenda

- Recommendations for screen time
- Monitoring screen time/media use
- Noise exposure
- Alternatives to screens - ideas



What's happening here? What's not happening?



Drawbacks?

- Screen time can take the place of:
 - Social interaction
 - Educational activities
 - Fine and gross motor development
 - Sleep
 - Attention
 - Emotional regulation
- The relationship between screen use and well being (American Academy of Pediatrics [online article](#))
 - There has **not** been direct evidence that shows that social media and increased screen time causes depression or anxiety in research studies



Previous AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) guidelines:

Screen time limits by age

Age	Recommended screen time per day
0-17 months	No screen time
18-24 months	No screen time, except for video chatting
2-4 years	One hour or less of high quality content
6 years+	Two hours or less



Recommendations for Parents and Caregivers:

It is important to consider the specific activities that children and teens engage in on social media, and to support them in using social media in ways that strengthen their social, emotional, cognitive and identity development. When it comes to household rules around technology use, [there is evidence that rules focusing on balance, content, co-viewing and communication are associated with better well-being outcomes than rules focused on screen time.](#) aap.org



Latest AAP guidelines (2026)

- Quality, content and conversation prioritized over strict time limits for each age level
- No screens before 18 months (expect video chat with family)
- One hour of “high quality content” for ages 2-5
- Keep sleep and meal time device free
- Think of screen time like a dessert (Dr. Williamson - Health.choc)



Any Benefits to using Technology and Screens?

This is very debatable and research is evolving

What is determined to be “educational” or “high quality content”?

- Eye/hand coordination
- Fine motor skills
- Problem solving
- Vocabulary and supplemental learning
- Attention and memory



The 5 C's of Media Use

The 5 Cs of Media Use

1. **C**hild- Who is your child and how do they react to media?
2. **C**ontent- What is worth their attention?
3. **C**alm- How do they calm their emotions or go to sleep?
4. **C**rowding out- What does media get in the way of?
5. **C**ommunication- How can you talk about media to raise a smart and responsible child?



The 5 C's of Media Use - For Infants

- Songs and stories in your own voice are best.
- Don't let media interfere with their learning to self-soothe.
- Avoid TV or YouTube viewing.
- Be careful not to allow screen media to interfere with predictable routines and interactions.



The 5 C's of Media Use - For Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Avoid open access to a tablet or a phone.
- Playing, reading, singing and getting outside with your child are all necessary to your child's development and may be reduced if they have too much time on screens.
- Monitor content carefully and avoid autoplay and apps/games with aggressive content.
- Talk to your child about what they see in videos. These can be good opportunities to learn and develop language skills.



How do we limit time?

- Create a routine
- Specific times so everyone knows
 - i.e. 30 min tablet after school, 30 minutes TV before bedtime routine, special movie night on Saturday
- Visual timer, if needed
- Clear rules and expectations - It's ok to say "no"
 - Only watch or play what is approved
 - No free scrolling on things like YouTube Kids
- Find something (non-screens) to engage with when time is done



Some examples of high quality media:

Apps that are:

- Open ended
- Ad free
- Encourage creativity
- Help you engage with your child

Examples:

- Super Simple Songs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVgv1EFJZHc&list=RDYVgv1EFJZHc&start_radio=1
- PBS Kids: <https://pbskids.org/games>
- Endless Alphabet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VqEACWO1yw>
- Pok Pok: [Pok Pok](#)
- Storyline Online: <https://storylineonline.net/>
- Peek-a-Boo Barn: [🌸★PEEKABOO BARN★🌸 - ipad iphone android app review video for kids for learning Farm Animals](#)
- Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>



Noise Levels - Protecting Your Child's Hearing [Healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

- Parent controls - set a maximum volume in the device
- 50-60% volume is a good rule
- Keep devices as far from the ear as possible
- Be careful with headphones and earbuds
 - You should not hear the signal
 - They should be able to hear you when you talk to them
- Noise machines 7 feet away 50dB or lower

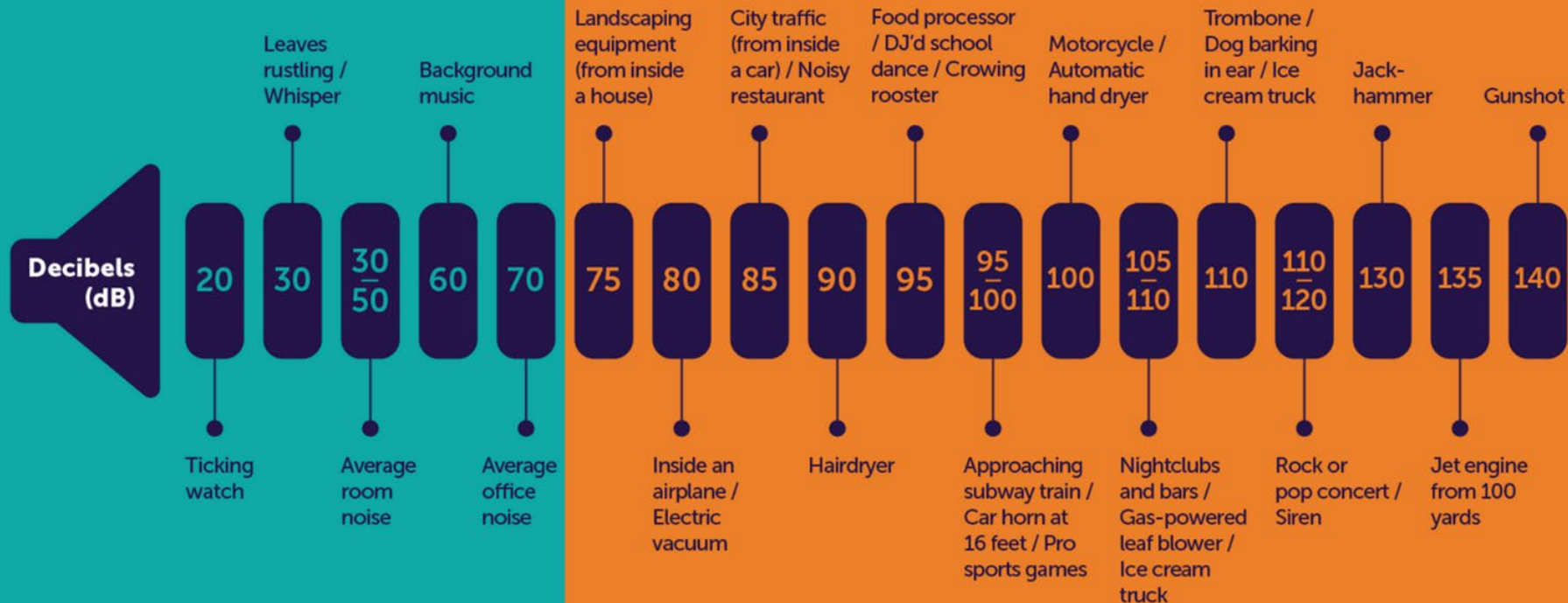
[Listen Up! Protect Your Hearing \(infographic\) | NIDCD](#)



NOISE LEVELS

Sounds at or below 70 dB are safe.

Sounds above 70 dB are harmful.



What about streaming for children with hearing devices?

1. Output limiting features on hearing and CIs prevents sounds that are too loud or harmful
2. Streaming content will drain batteries faster
3. *Equal input* from both the streaming device and the environmental microphones (Typically a default setting)
4. Aim for about 50-60% volume
5. Reducing background noises will help children to be able to hear their content while keeping it at a safe volume



Alternatives to Screen Time

It's OK for children to be bored!

And

Quiet time is good for the auditory brain



Alternatives to Screen Time

- Fine motor skills
- Creativity
- Gross Motor skills
- Go outside
- Reading
- Sensory Play



Alternatives to Screen Time- Outside of the home

Waiting rooms...

Restaurants...

Car rides...

- Mini notebooks
- Colored pencils
- Water wow or magic ink sets
- Google “busy bags”
- “I spy”
- Talking games: Going on a picnic



Summary

- AAP Recommendations
- Noise exposure risks
- Use tech wisely- maintain your rules and expectations
- Children learn best from **human interactions!**

Thank you for your attention!

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