HEALTHY MEDIA HABITS TOOLKIT

HEALTHY MEDIA HABITS VIDEO CURRICULUM TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

The content of this video series is designed to be empowering to parents so that they can ditch the guilt and feel good about the media choices they make for their children. The presenters point out that healthy media choices not only avoid harm but actually enhance learning for young children. However, most of the messages that parents receive are about the dangers of overuse of media and digital devices. Since we live in a digital world, it is difficult to avoid media use and many parents don't want to. Consequently, they live with a lot of shame about almost any amount of time they allow their children to use media.

It is important to promote this video series and the presenters as non-judgmental. You are a trusted messenger for parents. You can help to make the presenters relatable to them. Let them know that you believe that they will find these resources to be comforting and helpful to them. Make sure that parents understand that the presenters, Liz and Roxy, though Ph.D. educated children's media experts, are also parents of young children themselves. As such they are not perfect, and they have times when they struggle to monitor and limit media use themselves. This is one of the reasons they want to share the knowledge, resources and tools that they have found to be helpful through their research and their real-life experience.

These videos contain a lot of information which can feel overwhelming to parents. You can provide more manageable segments of the video by using the "Table of Contents" and the interests/needs of parents to guide you. Emphasize that they don't have to take in everything for the video to be helpful. Ask parents to focus on finding one or two useful ideas when they watch a video.

One of the best ways that parents can benefit from the content of these videos is by receiving information directly *from you.* They might not even need to watch the video themselves. If you familiarize yourself with the concepts in the videos, you can simply share ideas with them spontaneously, whenever a question or concern pops up.

Examples:

Scenario 1

You are facilitating a playgroup when a parent shares that they only allow their toddler to watch shows that are marketed for young children on YouTube, but that the child is now asking for expensive and inappropriate toys and snacks that he sees in the ads. You briefly share that YouTube videos can be a problem for that reason. Plus, they can expose a child to inappropriate videos after the child-friendly video ends, if a caregiver doesn't stop it right away. You indicate that PBS kids or videos from streaming services are often a better choice for concerned parents, because they do not contain ads or stream random content after the episode ends. You share the Media Menu handout with the parents.

Scenario 2

You are talking with a parent of an infant and toddler who is babysitting two preschool aged siblings for extra income. This parent wants to allow the older children to watch a video while the younger ones are napping so that she can get a little time to regroup for the afternoon. The children's mother only wants her children to watch good quality, educational shows but the parent who is babysitting isn't sure what to look for. You share the High-Quality Video Checklist and go over it together. Then you suggest that she might want to watch video #3 in the Healthy Media Use video series to get more detailed information.

The content of this video series is not only relevant to parents, but also to professionals who care for or teach young children or who work with families of young children. The information in the videos can help to establish standards for how media is used and what young children can view in early childhood programs. It can also help to guide the individual early childhood or child care provider in making choices for the families in their care. Family support professionals can use this information to share with parents as they guide primary caregivers in making health media choices for their children, whether providing information about access to the video series for self-directed use by parents, building programming options using the video curriculum, incorporating the videos into existing programming or, as mentioned above, communicating information directly to parents themselves in one on one or small group interactions.

Regardless of the purpose for which a professional is using the curriculum, they will need to familiarize themselves with the specific content of each video and the handouts. The handouts may be used independently of the videos if an educator thinks they will be a beneficial resource but does not have the opportunity to show a video segment. However, the handouts are much more useful when used in tandem with the videos or with educator information.

USES OF CURRICULUM

Parent Education Programming	‣ Parent Education Workshop Series (five sessions – 60 or 90 minutes) ‣ Seminar or Parent Night (Choose one session) ‣ Parent Café (Watch video and use questions from curriculum for table questions or simply show video before or after cafe) ‣ Incorporate into Triple P Workshop, especially Screentime Workshops (Must be explicit that this information does not come from Triple P) ‣ Micro sharing - Use detailed description of content to select 2 to 3 minute segment of video plus handout ‣ Playgroup or parenting group– watch video (or segment) and discuss or facilitator sharing information directly or providing link to website or handouts during discussion times ‣ Content will be added to the Five for Families curriculum in the future
One on One	‣ Triple P Primary Care - show and discuss brief segment during sessions (Must be clear that this information does not come from Triple P.) ‣ Home visit - watch video (or segment) with parent during home visit and discuss ‣ Individual conversations – educator shares information from video with parent directly and provides link to website or handouts
Parent Leader Education or Training	‣ Use curriculum or show video and discuss as individual seminar or workshop series ‣ Incorporate into Parent Leadership Orientation
Professional Development for Child and Family Serving Professionals	‣ Lunch and Learn (watch video and discuss) ‣ Staff meeting ‣ Professional development training
Community Education	‣ Guest presentation for community partners (health care, library, Birth to 3, school system EC providers. coalitions) ‣ Mini Campaign: Children's Healthy Media Use Day, Week, or Month; end of school year or mid-winter ‣ Contact hospital family education programs and and offer to provide the program or materials
Public Awareness	‣ Social media posts with links to videos ‣ Play on loop, as people are coming in for programming, meetings or waiting for sessions to start ‣ Play during communal mealtimes ‣ Play prior to meetings or activities ‣ Play on loop in waiting rooms (health care providers, WIC, HHS) ‣ Create a bookmark with key principles and QR code for the Healthy Media Habits site ‣ Create a postcard and/or flyer with QR code for tabling events ‣ Create stickers with QR code to paste on materials given to families (book giveaways, handouts, lollipops) ‣ Share flyer with description to share with employees, partners or contact lists to distribute.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

2. CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Healthy Media Habits Promotional Flyers

Flyers for the Healthy Media Habits Video Series can be used to promote the videos and handouts as part of an educational offering or to provide the web link to access the materials directly. The link for three flyer options can be found below. Each flyer has an editable box that can be customized to provide class or training informa:on or the direct link to the content.

Flyer A

Flyer B
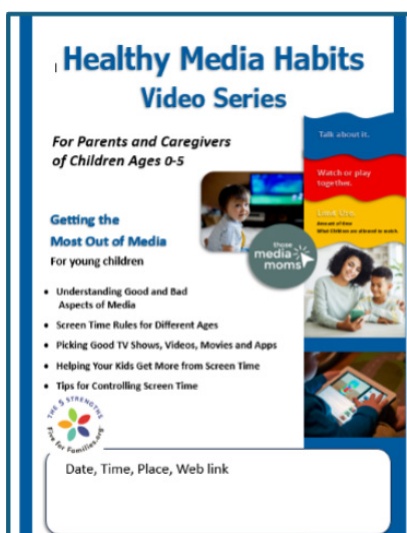
Flyer C

OVERVIEW AND KEY TAKEAWAYS OF EACH VIDEO

▶ VIDEO 1: OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SHAPE CHILDREN'S DIGITAL WORLD (12 MINS)

Overview
- Introduction
- Recommendations for healthy media use from the AAP
- What kids are doing on screens
- Research findings on current media use
- Strategies for managing children's screen time

Key Takeaways
- Young children spend double the amount of time recommended on screens, mainly watching shows and videos
- The AAP recommends no screen time for children under 18 months, except for video chat, which is okay for kids of all ages
- Children 18-24 months can have some high-quality screen time with an adult
- Children ages 2-5 should aim for one hour or less of screen time per day
- The content and context of media use are important, not just the amount of time

▶ VIDEO 2: THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF SCREENS (13 MINS)

Overview

The Negatives of Screens for Kids
- Potential harms of media overuse
- Impact of background TV
- Influences of adult tech use on children
- Impact of screens on child behavior

The Positives of Screens for Kids
- Bonding with caregivers
- Emotional connection and emulation of screen characters
- Gaining educational knowledge
- Opportunity to play and be entertained

Key Takeaways
- Caregivers should consider their goals when offering screen time and make choices to support the benefits of screens while being aware of the risks
- Excessive screen time is linked to obesity, sleep problems and delays in brain development
- Screens can interrupt caregiver-child interactions in a negative way
- Joint media engagement can help children learn from media and support bonding
- Educational media can help children learn language, literacy, math, science, creativity and social-emotional skills

▶ VIDEO 3: EVALUATING MEDIA CONTENT & CHOOSING HIGH-QUALITY OPTIONS (11 MINS)

Overview
- Choosing High-Quality TV Shows, Videos, Movies, Apps and eBooks
- Content matters because children copy what they see
- What to look for and what to avoid for each type of media

Key Takeaways
- Choosing good media content for kids is hard but also important for their development
- It's up to parents, caregivers and educators to decide what media content is best
- Not every video or app advertised "for kids" or "educational" is actually good for them
- Having many options isn't necessarily better; kids learn more when they watch the same show, movie or episode over and over
- Watching videos on a TV that stays in one spot is best for children, followed by watching
- on a tablet, the least preferred is giving children your phone
- Try to find apps and e-books that are interactive and engaging, with a clear storyline or
- lesson that is relatable to children's real lives
- When possible, use media with children to help support their learning and to make sure the content is appropriate for their age

▶ VIDEO 4: BOOSTING THE BENEFITS OF SCREEN TIME (10 MINS)

Overview
- Boosting the benefits of screen media for kids
- Understanding joint media engagement before, during, and after media use

Key Takeaways
- Balance caregiver involvement with a child's screen time and screen time on the child's own, because using media together isn't always possible
- Choose educational media options that match children's interests and caregivers' goals
- Be clear about screen time goals and rules; prepare children just before media use to help set their screen time expectations and reduce power struggles
- Talk with children while using screens together
- Ask questions and talk about media together to get children in your care thinking, reflecting, predicting and creating memories with you
- Support a child's media use with joint media engagement techniques before, during and after screen use to boost the benefits of screen time

Overview
- A Family Media Plan: Introducing, setting up and choosing priorities

Key Takeaways
- A family media plan is a helpful tool for including all family members in creating and sticking to your media rules and limits in the house
- Potential priorities to focus on in your family media plan:
    » Balancing screen time with off-screen play
    » Setting media time limits and turning off devices when not in use
    » Having regular conversations with kids about screen time and what they see
    » Creating screen-free times and areas
    » Choosing high-quality media options
    » Using media together as a family
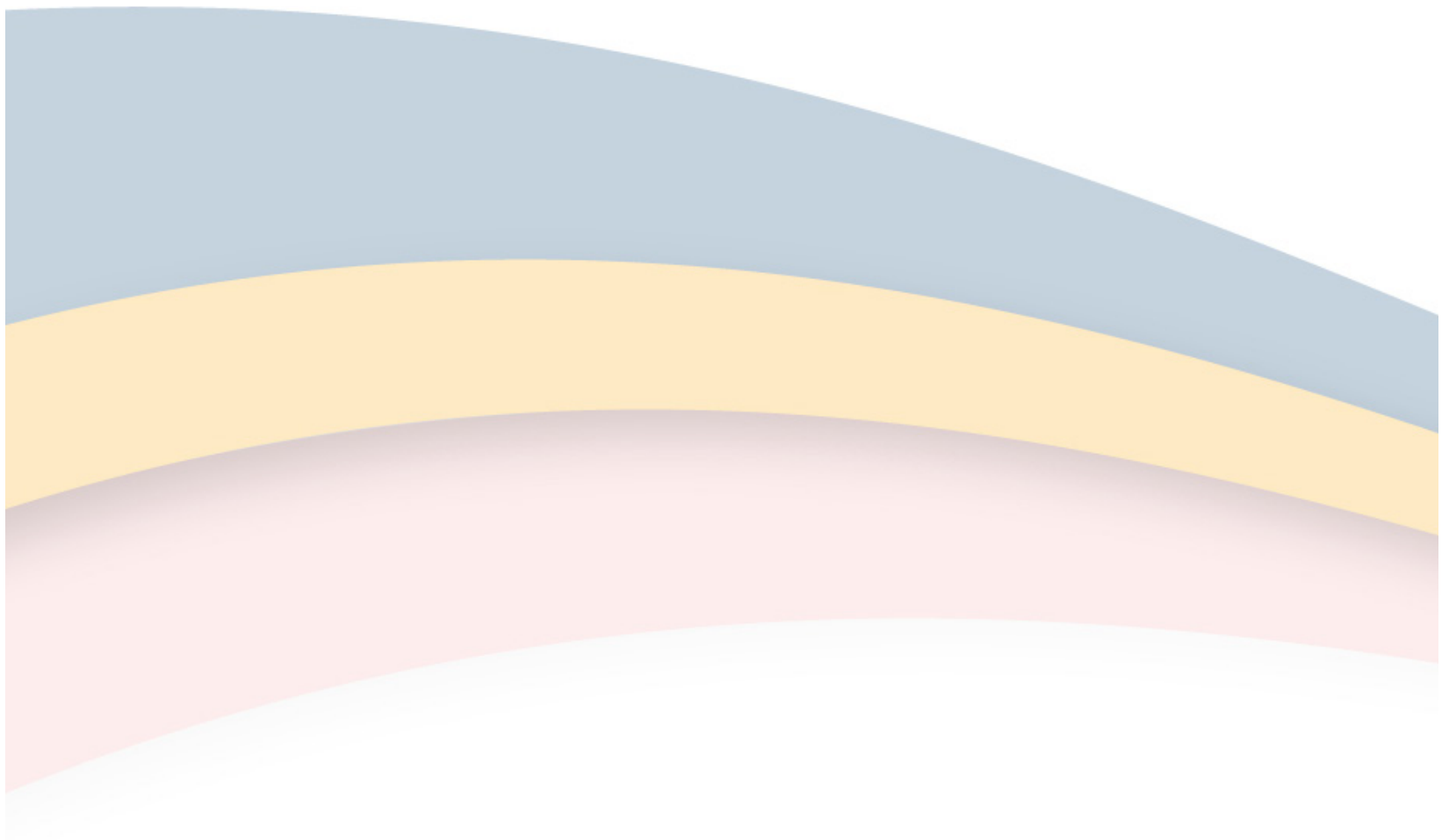
Social media posts

Bucket 1: Media Doesn't Have to Be a Bad Thing

Post 1: Media Can Be Positive for Kids and Families

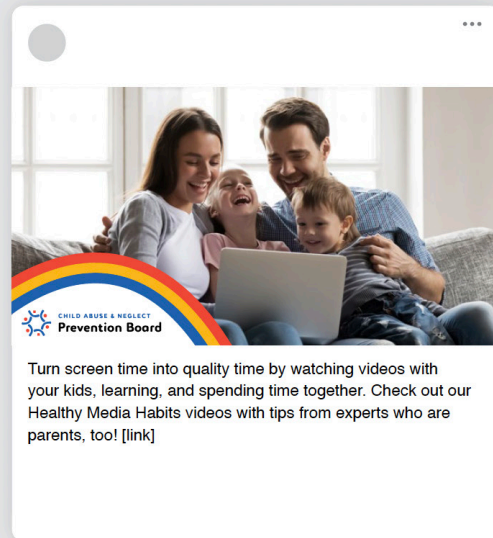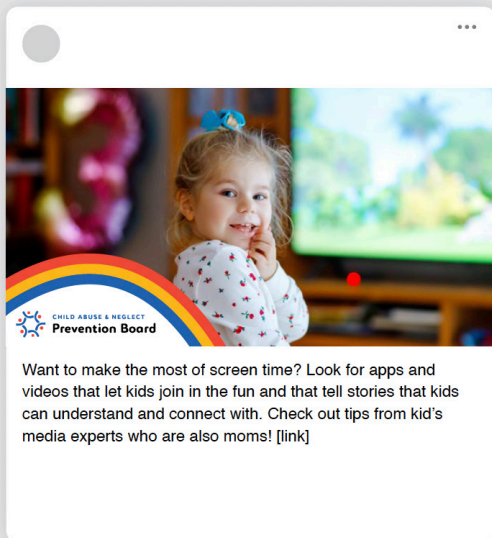Worried about your kid's screen time? Some videos and apps can be a good thing, since the right ones build knowledge, foster connection, and enhance learning. Learn how to choose with Healthy Media Habits videos! [link]
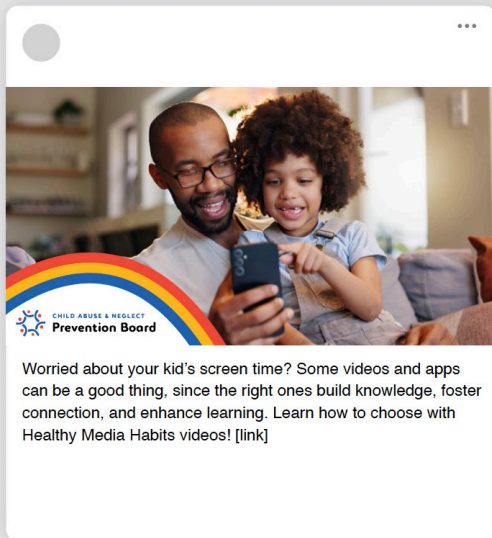
Post 2: Ditch the Guilt-You're Doing Better Than You Think

Turn screen time into quality time by watching videos with your kids, learning, and spending time together. Check out our Healthy Media Habits videos with tips from experts who are parents, too! [link]
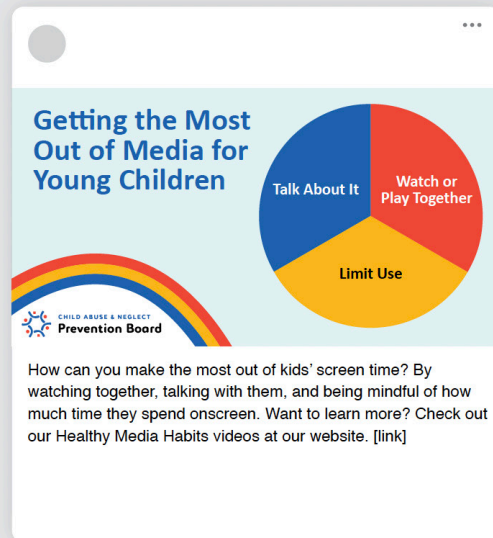
Bucket 2: Getting the Most Out of Media for Young Children

Post 3: Choose High-Quality Content for Big Benefits

Want to make the most of screen time? Look for apps and videos that let kids join in the fun and that tell stories that kids can understand and connect with. Check out tips from kid's media experts who are also moms! [link]

Post 4: Getting the Most Out of Media—Pie Chart Visual

Getting the Most Out of Media for Young Children

Talk About It

Watch or Play Together

Limit Use

How can you make the most out of kids' screen time? By watching together, talking with them, and being mindful of how much time they spend onscreen. Want to learn more? Check out our Healthy Media Habits videos at our website. [link]

Bucket 3: Use Media and Talk About It With Kids

Post 5: Watch and Talk-Boost Learning Together

Turn screen time into connection time — with each other! Choose and talk about videos together with your child. Find video and question ideas, plus handouts, in the Healthy Media Habits video series. [link]

Post 6: Ask Questions to Make Screen Time Count

Kids learn more from videos when you ask questions after they are done, like, "What was your favorite part?" or "How did the show make you feel?" For more ideas, check out our Healthy Media Habits videos. [link]

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF VIDEO CONTENTS

Video 1: Healthy Media Habits: Our Responsibility to Shape Children's Digital World

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 1:22	Introduction of topic and researchers	"In fact, by the time the average child graduates from high school in America, they will have spent more time using digital media than in a classroom."
1:23 – 2:02	Start defining caregiver and concerns	"Research shows that most caregivers feel worried about the way kids are using screens. If you're worried about early media use, you're not alone."
2:03 – 2:26	Media Mentor	
2:27 – 4:05	General recommendations for children's media use	Breakdown of screen time recommendation by age range and how parents should be using media with their children.
4:06 – 4:49	What else is the child doing during the day vs. screen time	Introduction of the scheduling worksheet.
4:50 – 5:54	Current research on how and what children are doing on screens; how access to and use of screens impacts the way children spend time	"The concern with too much screen time for young children is that it might be taking away time that could be spent doing other important activities, like playing, sleeping, physical activity and reading books with a caregiver."
5:55 – 6:40	What children are doing on screens	Statistics of what children watch on their screens (movies, play apps, TV, etc.).
6:41 – 7:44	Warnings on content, ads and how creators of child media are trying to keep kids watching	"Mobile devices like smartphones have changed the game for kids' screen time. Content is available all the time and easy to access. Unfortunately, a lot of online content is also designed to keep kids' eyes on the screen. Video creators make money based on views."

7:45 – 8:23	Parental (or caregiver) mediation	General description of caregiver mediation.
8:24 – 8:45	Restrictive mediation	Defines term and discusses how just setting limits isn't enough to positively impact children's screen time.
8:46 – 9:30	Active mediation	Defines term "active mediation". "Research shows that ongoing communication with children about their media use is the best way to manage screen time."
9:31 – 10:04	Media-free areas	Discusses one active mediation strategy.
10:05 – 10:49	Using media together with children	Discusses one active mediation strategy.
10:50 – 11:11	Creating a media menu	Discusses one active mediation strategy.
11:12 – 11:58	Takeaways	
11:59 - end	Ending slide with list of resources	

Video 2: Healthy Media Habits: Risks and Benefits of Screens

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 1:27	Introduction of topic	"Screens will _not_ rot your child's brain. Digital media itself is not the main issue, but rather _how_ media is used."
Part 1: Potential Negatives of Screen Time for Kids		
1:28 – 2:44	Health concern: screen time and obesity	Discusses the research of screen time and increase in BMI.
2:45 – 3:26	Health concern: influence of screen time on sleep	"The best way to avoid these types of problems is to keep screens out of the bedroom and reduce screen time in the hours before bedtime; Avoid making screens a part of the bedtime routine."
3:27 – 4:54	Health concern: influence of screen time on brain development	"One area of young brains that is especially impacted by too much screen time is **language development**. This is likely because when screens are on, caregivers are less likely to talk to young children. One study found that when a TV is on, parents say 39% fewer words to their child."
4:55 – 5:29	Reinforcing the suggested amount of screen time	"Above all else, remember that kids learn and grow best from in-person interactions with their caregivers. Even the highest-quality screen content cannot replace this. You matter the most!"
5:30 – 6:22	Defines Technoference	"Technoference is when screens disrupt real face-to-face interactions. It's when you are paying attention to your phone and not to the people around you. This often causes caregivers to miss children trying to interact, like a toddler asking a question or a baby cooing at you." "When caregivers use screens a lot, it is linked to worse behaviors from children and negative feelings for kids like aggression and sadness."
6:23 – 7:20	Goes over research on how screen time influences children's behavior	"Children copy the behaviors they see on screen, including negative behaviors like hurting others. "… children hold onto the negative things they saw and miss out on that bigger lesson."

7:21 – 8:00	What your child is watching or using on-screen makes a big difference	Educational media content is the best option for young children. "It's important to remember that all kids are unique, and that media affects each child differently. But you are the expert on children in your care and are the best person to make healthy media decisions for them."
8:01 – 8:34	Part 2: The Positives of Screens for Kids	Defines term "screentime" and discusses how just setting limits isn't enough to positively impact children's screen time.
8:35 – 10:12	One benefit of screen time is bonding	"Yes, screen time can be quality time!" Defines joint media engagement and discusses how children can bond with the characters in the media they are watching."
10:13 – 10:57	Another benefit of screen time is learning	Discusses the benefits of educational TV programs and videos. "Choosing high-quality media content for children when they're young can help give them a strong base of knowledge to grow for years to come."
10:58 – 11:41	Discusses how apps are different than TV/videos (educational TV).	"Even though it is new, research suggests that children learn differently from apps than they do from videos. Some research shows that apps are the most helpful for learning when they teach science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) lessons. Apps and interactive e-books can also support language learning by helping children practice letters, phonics, and sight words."
11:42 – 12:41	Benefits are different and depend upon your goals as a caregiver	"Every time you turn on a screen…1) think about why you are offering screen time, 2) remember the risks, and 3) make choices to support the benefits."
12:42 – 13:20	Takeaways	
13:21 – end	Check out resource	

Video 3: Evaluating Media Content and Choosing High-Quality Options for TV, Videos and Movies

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 1:20	Introduction of topic	"We have created simple lists to show you what to look for. These lists are based on many years of research on what works and what doesn't."
1:21 – 2:04	Television and kids	"Watching TV isn't easy for kids. It's more than sitting back and relaxing, it actually takes a lot of brain power and skills for kids."
2:05 – 2:58	Two things to remember	"Not every show or video that is advertised for kids is good for them."
2:59 – 3:40	Repetition	"Research shows that kids actually learn more when they watch the same show or episodes over and over."
4:55 – 5:29	Reinforcing the suggested amount of screen time	"Above all else, remember that kids learn and grow best from in-person interactions with their caregivers. Even the highest-quality screen content cannot replace this. You matter the most!"
3:41 – 5:28	Device choices	"It's best for kids to watch on a TV screen that stays in one spot."
5:29 – 6:59	YouTube videos	"20% of ads showed (to children) inappropriate topics such as violent, sexual or political content."
7:00 – 8:06	Understanding ratings	"Ratings often only show you what to avoid, not what's best [for your child]."
8:07 – 8:32	Traditional video games	"We don't recommend traditional video games for younger kids."
8:33 – 8:34	One minute break	
9:34 – end	What to look for	"The number one thing to look for is whether or not they [TV, videos, movies or apps] are geared for their age."

Video 4: Boosting the Benefit of Screen Time

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 1:08	Introduction of topic	"The biggest thing you can do is get involved with your child's screen time yourself."
1:09 – 1:58	Before screen Use	Being aware of the child's skill level and what they understand.
1:59 – 3:01	Explore child's interests	"Choose media that includes things the child is familiar with or enjoys."
3:02 – 3:49	Select topics that match your learning goals for your child	Select content that matches what you want your child to learn about.
3:50 – 4:09	Letting the child know what to expect	"Give a preview to your child before they watch."
4:10 – 4:54	Set clear rules	Set rules on how long, what they can watch, and what will follow after media use ends."
4:55 – 5:38	Explain what you are doing	Explaining what you, yourself, are doing with media, so children understand its many uses.
5:39 –7:06	Boosting benefits during screen use	Research-based ideas that can boost the benefits of screens and increase learning.
7:07 – 7:43	Scripts and tips	Attached document that provides ideas for what to say when talking about media.
7:44 – 8:36	eBooks	"Video chat is appropriate and valuable for children of all ages."
9:50 – end	After media use	"Help [your child] with building connections between the screen and real life."

Video 5: Mastering the Media Environment

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 0:55	Introducing the family media plan	Creating a media plan is an effective way to manage home media use. Use the Creating Your Family Media Plan PDF.
0:56 – 2:21	Setting up a family media plan	The media plan is for all family members - parents and children. Create a plan that covers all areas of home media use. The video and media plan document outline 6 priorities to consider for a family media plan.
2:22 – 3:43	Balancing screen time with off-screen play	"Balancing screen time with off-screen play is important. Make sure the child has enough face-to-face time, indoor and outdoor play and rest. Parents also need to balance screen and off-screen time.
3:44 – 6:37	Setting media time limits	It is essential to maintain a balance between screen time and real life, for both children and parents. Parents need to create, explain and enforce the rules.
6:38 – 9:39	Talking about media with your kids	Have regular conversations with children about screen time so children feel comfortable discussing media with parents, and so they are willing to talk about what is scary, upsetting, or shocking. Talk with children about how social media makes them feel.
9:40 – 11:48	Creating screen-free times and areas	Consider where technology is located in the home and what times of day should be screen-free.
11:49 – 13:08	Using high-quality shows and apps	Offer creative, friendly, positive, and educational media options. Use the Video and App Checklists.
13:09 – 15:13	Using media together	Suggestions for ways to make media fun for the entire family.
15:14 – 16:11	Daily media scheduling worksheet	
16:12 – 16:45	Key takeaways	

Video 5: Mastering the Childcare Media Environment (For childcare providers)

Time	Theme	Major Point or Quote
Start – 0:47	Introducing the media plan	"Creating a media plan is an effective way to manage media use in your early childhood environment. A media plan helps you think about your goals, values, priorities, and rules around technology. Caregivers have different approaches, rules, and habits for media use. Your media plan will be unique to your own goals and needs."
0:48 – 1:56	Setting up a media plan and choosing priorities	"Consider the children in your care; what matters most to you about screen time—your own use, children's use?"
1:57 – 2:52	Finding the right balance for screen time	"Reflect on the amount of screen time children in your care experience. Is screentime educational or entertainment? Is it used regularly, intentionally scheduled, used on special occasions, or never used? Significantly more of the day should be spent in play than on media."
2:53 – 4:31	Setting media time limits	"It is essential to maintain a balance between screen time and real life."
4:32 – 6:40	Talking about media with children and their families	"Having regular conversations about screen time with both children and families is beneficial. Discussing with children helps them understand rules and builds media awareness."
6:41 – 8:10	Creating screen-free times and areas	"Consider where technology is located in your location and what times should be screen-free."
8:11 – 8:34	Using high-quality shows and apps	Offer creative, friendly, positive, and educational media options. Use the Video and App Checklists.
8:35 – 9:49	Using media together	"Make use of media with staff and children both fun and educational. Use the Daily Scheduling Worksheet to plan media use during the children's day."
9:50 – 10:26	Key takeaways	

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Healthy media habits video series for parents

And caregivers of children ages 0-5

This is a curriculum guide for five 60 to 90 minute sessions. If you want to take more time to go through the handouts, do the activities together, and discuss as a group, you will likely need to schedule 90 minutes. If you plan to keep the discussion short and provide the handouts as resources for parents to use following the session, you will likely be able to fit the content into 60 minutes.

You are welcome to offer one or all of the sessions, whatever works for your group and timeframe. If you only have time for a portion of a video or have a particular topic that you would like to highlight, you can use the Table of Contents from this toolkit to help you find the segment that meets your needs.

The videos are streamed through YouTube, so you will need to ensure that you have a screen and internet access with sufficient speed.

*You will want to be clear about the fact that these videos are targeting **parents and caregivers of children from 0 to 5.***

Welcome Participants: (10 Minutes)

- Share a little bit about yourself
  Ask participants to share
    » Their name
    » The names, ages and gender of the children in their lives
    » What they want to learn or get from the session
    » Their current favorite show, video game, app or movie.
Make sure that you prepare participants to keep their responses brief. Have the questions on display somewhere, if possible, so they don't have to try to remember them while they are answering. Ask them to give their best 30 second introduction. It will invariably take longer.

Warm-up discussion question: (10-15 minutes)
What concerns do you have about media use for your child?

You have a discussion with the whole group, or, if the group is large, divide them into pairs or smaller groups and have them discuss for 5 minutes. You can also ask the smaller groups to share their main ideas with the larger group, depending on your timeframe. Make sure to note or even write down the concerns the group has in common.

Share Overview of what they will hear in Video 1: (2 minutes)
- Introduction to Liz Horgan and Roxy Etta, the creators and narrators of the videos, who are moms of young children and, also, happen to be children's media experts
  Be sure to emphasize that Liz and Roxy are not judging other parents. Just the opposite. They understand the challenges and benefits of media use because they are making the same decisions and choices for and have the same struggles with their own young children.
- Recommendations for healthy media use from the AAP
- What kids are doing on screens
- Research findings on current media use
- Strategies for managing children's screen time

Show Video 1: (12 minutes)

Go Over Key Takeaways from the Video: (2 minutes)

- Young children spend double the amount of time recommended on screens, mainly watching shows and videos.
- The AAP recommends no screen time for children under 18 months, except for video chat which is okay for kids of all ages
- Children 18-24 months can have some high-quality screen time with an adult
- Children ages 2-5 should aim for one hour or less of screen time per day
- The content and context of media use are important, not just the amount of time

Follow-up Discussion: (10 - 20 minutes)**:**

You can choose from the following questions. You do not need to use them all and probably will not have enough time to do so.
• What were your own media experiences like as a child?
• How did your own media experience compare with the way kids are using media today?
• What was one of the most surprising things you learned from the video?
• What was one of the most helpful things you learned from the video?
• Do you think that you could set up media free zones in your home?
• What, if anything, in the video concerned you?
• What is one thing that you want to try?

If you are doing the session in 60 minutes.

Wrap-up: (8-10 minutes)

• Go through each of the handouts and explain how to use them
    » *What is Your Mediation Style*? - self-assessment

    » *Active Mediation Ideas* - guide

    » *Daily Scheduling* - worksheet

    » *Sample Media Menu* – worksheet
.
• Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
• Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/ HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

If you are doing the session in 90 minutes.

Extension Activities for Parents
• Go over the "What is Your Mediation Style?" self-assessment and have participants complete the assessment. (10 minutes)

    Let participants know that no one else needs to see their assessment, so they can be very honest.

    » Ask participants to share how they feel about their mediation style
    » Did they learn anything about themselves?
    » Is there anything they might want to change or do more of?
• Go through the "Active Mediation Ideas" Handout. Suggest that they might want to post the handout somewhere visible as a daily reminder. (5 minutes)
• Go through the "Sample Media Menu Handout" (10 minutes)
    Let participants know that Video 3 focuses on what to look for and how to choose high-quality TV shows, videos, movies, and apps for young children.

» Are you familiar with any of the shows on the sample media menu? (*Please note for parents: The shows on the menu are just examples and **not** the only high-quality shows available for children.*)

» How old do you think a child needs to be in order to understand and use a media menu?

» Do you think it could be helpful to use a media menu with your child?

- Go over the "Weekday and Weekend Schedule" Handouts (5 minutes)
Another helpful tool is the "Weekday and Weekend Schedule Handouts" where parents can think about when they want to be intentional about when they want to offer media time to their child and when they want to schedule other important things, especially both outdoor and indoor play time. Parents can also use this tool to track how their children are currently spending their time throughout the day.

Wrap-up: (5 minutes)

- Final Discussion Question
    » Did you learn what you were hoping to get from the session? If not, did you learn something else useful?
- Round Robin:
    » What is one thing that you will take away from our time together today?
- Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

Welcome Participants: (10 Minutes)

If you are offering the videos as a series to the same group, it will still be helpful for them to go over these questions, to remind everyone and build group cohesion. Plus, you may have new members.
- Share a little bit about yourself
  Ask participants to share
    - » Their name
    - » The names, ages and gender of the children in their lives
    - » What they want to learn or get from the session
    - » In one or two words, what is one struggle you have with your child about media use?

Make sure that you prepare participants to keep their responses brief. Have the questions on display somewhere, if possible, so they don't have to try to remember them while they are answering. Ask them to give their best 30 second introduction. It will invariably take longer.

Warm-up discussion question: (10-15 minutes)
In what ways have you noticed your own media or tech use impacting your child?

You have a discussion with the whole group, or, if the group is large, divide them into pairs or smaller groups and have them discuss for 5 minutes. You can also ask the smaller groups to share their main ideas with the larger group, depending on your timeframe. Make sure to note or even write down the concerns the group has in common.

Share Overview of what they will hear in Video: (2 minutes)

The Negatives of Screens for Kids
- Potential harms of media overuse
- Impact of background TV
- Influences of adult tech use on children
- Impact of screens on child behavior

The Positives of Screens for Kids
- Bonding with caregivers
- Emotional connection and emulation of screen characters
- Gaining educational knowledge
- Opportunity to play and be entertained

Show Video 2: (13 minutes)

Go Over Key Takeaways from the Video: (2 minutes)
- Parents and caregivers should consider their goals when offering screen time and make choices to support the benefits of screens while also being aware of the risks
- Too much screen time has been linked to becoming overweight, sleep problems and delays in brain development
- Screens can negatively affect your relationship and in your everyday interactions with your child
- Joint media engagement can help children learn from media and support bonding
- Educational media can help children learn language, reading, math, science, creativity and strategies to get along with others

Follow-up Discussion: (10 - 20 minutes)**:**
You can choose from the following questions. You do not need to use them all and probably will not have enough time to do so.

Discussion Questions for Parents:
- Have you seen children imitate behaviors from a TV show or movie?
- Have you used media to help your child learn something? What was it and how did it go?
- Do you think the possible pluses of screen time balance out the minuses?
- What are some ways you can increase the benefits and lessen the risks for yourself and your children?
- What was one of the most surprising things you learned from the video?
- What was one of the most helpful things you learned from the video?
- What, if anything, in the video concerned you?
- What is one thing that you might want to try or do differently after watching the video?

If you are doing the session in 60 minutes.

Wrap-up: (8-10 minutes)
- Go through each of the handouts and explain how to use them.
  - » Parent Media Use Diary
    Instructions:
    Tell parents to think about their media habits and make their best guess about the amount and types of media they use each day. Encourage them to reflect on whether they have any concerns or challenges with their own media use. Next, tell them to complete a Media Use Diary Entry with their actual media use for one day and compare their actual media use to their guess.
  - » Child Media Use Diary
    Instructions:
    Tell parents to think about their children's media habits and make their best guess about the amount and types of media their children use each day. Encourage them to reflect on whether they have any concerns or challenges with their children's media use. Next tell them to complete a Media Use Diary Entry to each child with their actual media use for one day and compare their child's actual media use to their guess.

- Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/ HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

If you are doing the session in 90 minutes.

Extension Activities for Parents (20 minutes)
- *Go over the* "Parent Media Use Diary" (10 minutes)
  Instructions:
  Think about your media habits. Make your best guess about the amount of and what types of media you use each day.
  Have parents use one copy of the worksheet and write down their guesses. Let them know that this is private and they don't need to show anyone.
  Group Discussion:
  » Do you have any concerns or challenges with your own media use?
  Tell parents to take home the worksheet with their guesses and another blank worksheet. Have them fill out a "Media Use Diary Entry" *about with their actual media use for one day and compare their actual media use to their guess.*
- *Go over the* "Child Media Use Diary" (10 minutes)
  Instructions:
  Think about each of your children's media use and habits. Make your best guess about the amount and types of media they use each day.

  Have parents use one copy of the worksheet and write down their guesses. Let them know that this is private, and they don't need to show anyone.

  » Do you have any concerns or challenges with your child's media use?

    Point out that it is very possible to have concerns about one child and not another or to have different concerns about different children.

    Tell parents to take home the worksheet with their guesses about each child's media use and another blank worksheet for each child. Have parents fill out a "Media Use Diary Entry" *about with the actual media use of each child for one day and compare each child's actual media use to their guess.*

Warm-up discussion question: (5 minutes)
- Final Discussion Question
  » Did you learn what you were hoping to get from the session? If not, did you learn something else useful?
- Round Robin:
  » What is one thing that you will take away from our time together today?
- Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
- If you are offering the sessions in a series, tell parents that you will ask them at the next session how the Media Use Diary Activity went and what, if anything, they discovered
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/ HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

Welcome Participants: (10 Minutes)

If you are offering the videos as a series to the same group, you may not need to go over participant names and names of children, but it doesn't hurt if you have a larger group or if you may have new members.

- Share a little bit about yourself
  Ask participants to share
    - » Their name
    - » The names, ages and gender of the children in their lives
    - » What they want to learn or get from the session
    - » What is your child's current favorite show, movie or app?

Make sure that you prepare participants to keep their responses brief. Have the questions on display somewhere, if possible, so they don't have to try to remember them while they are answering. Ask them to give their best 30 second introduction. It will invariably take longer.

Warm-up discussion question: (10-15 minutes)

What are some of the rules you follow to decide when and what media your child can use?

You have a discussion with the whole group, or, if the group is large, divide them into pairs or smaller groups and have them discuss for 5 minutes. You can also ask the smaller groups to share their main ideas with the larger group, depending on your timeframe. Make sure to note or even write down the concerns the group has in common.

Share Overview of what they will hear in Video 3: (2 minutes)

Overview

Choosing High-Quality TV Shows, Videos, Movies, Apps and eBooks
- Content matters because children copy what they see
- What to look for and what to avoid for each type of media

Show Video 3: (11 minutes)

Go Over Key Takeaways from the Video: (2 minutes)
- Choosing good media content for kids is hard but also important for their development
- It's up to parents to decide what media options are best for each of their children
- Not every video or app advertised "for kids" or "educational" is actually good for them
- Having many choices isn't necessarily better for kids because they actually learn more from watching the same show, movie or episode over and over
- Watching videos on a TV that stays in one spot is best for children, followed by watching on a tablet. The least preferred is giving children your phone
- Try to find apps and e-books that are interactive and interesting to the child, with a clear storyline or lesson that is relatable to their real life
- When possible, use media together with children so you can help support their learning *and* make sure the content is appropriate for their age

Follow-up Discussion: (10 - 20 minutes)**:**
You can choose from the following questions. You do not need to use them all and probably will not have enough time to do so.
Discussion Questions for Parents:
- How do you currently choose which videos and apps your children use?
- Are there ways that you will do differently after watching this video?
- Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or learning after using certain videos or apps?
- How important do you think it is to make sure that children are able to watch and use high-quality, educational types of media?
- How could this responsibility be shared among parents, other caregivers (like grandparents, childcare providers or your friends with children), teachers and people who create media?
- What was one of the most surprising things you learned from the video?
- What was one of the most helpful things you learned from the video?
- What, if anything, in the video concerned you?
- What is one thing that you might want to try or do differently after watching the video?

If you are doing the session in 60 minutes.

Wrap-up: (8-10 minutes)
- Go through each of the handouts
  - » High-Quality Checklist for Videos, Shows, and Movies
  - » High-Quality Checklist for Apps
  - » What's scary for Kids at Different Ages
  - » What to Say if Your Child Sees Scary Stuff
- Encourage parents to commit to using the checklists and the 5 Step Script to talk about scary stuff at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

If you are doing the session in 90 minutes.

Extension Activities for Parents (20 minutes)
- *Go over the* "High-Quality Checklist for Videos, Shows, and Movies" (10 minutes)
- Have parents use their phones to visit the PBS Kids website
- First check out the list of current shows or open the website for the group on the screen you used for the video
- Have parents choose one show to test out with the High-Quality Media Checklist for Videos, Shows, or Movies
- Have parents review the content and fill out the checklist as they go

You can do this activity as a large group, individually or divide participants into small groups.

- Next, have parents choose one app from the PBS Kids website to test with the High-Quality Media Checklist for Apps
- Have parents review the content and fill out the checklist as they go.
You can do this activity as a large group, individually or divide participants into small groups.

Discussion:
- How did this activity go? Did this checklist help you with how you want to make choices for your child or children about media they can use?
- Go over the "What's scary for Kids at Different Ages" handout
- Go through the "What to Say if Your Child Sees Scary Stuff" 5-Step Script

Activity:
Divide participants into pairs.
Share this scenario or make up your own: Your three year old is over at your sister's house. His older cousin is watching TV and your child walks into the room and accidentally sees a monster on the screen. He comes home terrified and now he is worried about going to bed. Use the 5-Step Script to practice how you could talk with him. Have one person be the child and the other person the parent.

Discussion:
- How did the activity go? Do you think the script might work? Why? *(Probably not all of the time, but some of the time.)*

Wrap-up: (5 minutes)
- Final Discussion
  » Did you learn what you were hoping to get from the session? If not, did you learn something else useful?
- Round Robin:
  » What is one thing that you will take away from our time together today?
- Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
  » Remember the Media Menu example that was shared with Video 1. When you get home take that out again and think about the shows and apps, you'd like to offer to your child moving forward.
  You might want to consider providing parents with a second copy of the Media Menu in case they have lost it.
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

Welcome Participants: (10 Minutes)
If you are offering the videos as a series to the same group, you may not need to go over names and names of children, but it doesn't hurt if you have a larger group or if you may have new members.
- Share a little bit about yourself
  Ask participants to share
  - » Their name
  - » The names, ages and gender of the children in their lives
  - » What they want to learn or get from the session
  - » When you were a child, did your family watch videos or movies together?

Make sure that you prepare participants to keep their responses brief. Have the questions on display somewhere, if possible, so they don't have to try to remember them while they are answering. Ask them to give their best 30 second introduction. It will invariably take longer.

Warm-up discussion question: (10-15 minutes)
What are shows or movies you like to watch or apps you like to play *with* your child? When do you watch or play together?

You have a discussion with the whole group, or, if the group is large, divide them into pairs or smaller groups and have them discuss for 5 minutes. You can also ask the smaller groups to share their main ideas with the larger group, depending on your timeframe. Make sure to note or even write down the concerns the group has in common.

Share Overview of what they will hear in Video 4: (2 minutes)
- Boosting the Benefits of Screen Media for Kids
- What to do before, during and after using media together with your child

Show Video 4: (10 minutes)

Go Over Key Takeaways from the Video: (2 minutes)
- It is ok to balance parent involvement with a child's screen time and screen time on the child's own, because using media together isn't always possible
- Make educational media choices that match children's interests and parents' goals
- Be clear about screen time goals and rules.
- Prepare children just before media use to help set their screen time expectations and reduce power struggles
- Talk with children when you are using screens together.
- Ask questions and talk together to get children thinking, reflecting, predicting and creating memories with you
- Use joint media engagement techniques before, during and after screen use to boost the benefits of screen time for children

Follow-up Discussion: (10 - 20 minutes)**:**
You can choose from the following questions. You do not need to use them all and probably will not have enough time to do so.
Discussion Questions for Parents:
- What does your children's screen time look like in your home? Are your children more likely to use screens as a way to occupy them while you're busy?
- How could you add more time for joint media engagement into your child's screentime?
- What could you do before, during or after their media to boost the benefits to your child?
- What was one of the most surprising things you learned from the video?
- What was one of the most helpful things you learned from the video?
- What, if anything, in the video concerned you?
- What is one thing that you might want to try or do differently after watching the video?

If you are doing the session in 60 minutes.

Wrap-up: (8-10 minutes)
- Go through each of the handouts
    » High-Quality Checklist for Videos, Shows, and Movies
    » High-Quality Checklist for Apps
    » What's scary for Kids at Different Ages
    » What to Say if Your Child Sees Scary Stuff
- Encourage parents to commit to use the checklists and the 5 Step Script to talk about scary stuff at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

If you are doing the session in 90 minutes.

Extension Activities for Parents (20 minutes)
- Go over the "Tools for Talking During Media Use, C-R-O-W-D and P-E-E-R Sample Scripts" Handouts (10 minutes with activity)
    Activity:
    Can be done individually or in small groups/pairs
- Think about one of your child's favorite shows, apps or books. Come up with 3 questions that
    you could ask your child before, during and after using one of their favorites. Keep in mind the discussion you hope to inspire and your learning goals.
- Go over the "Boosting the Benefits of Screen Time" Handout (10 minutes with activity)

Activity:
Might be more beneficial if participants can tackle this in pairs.

- Plan a joint media engagement experience from start to finish
- Pick a show, book or app that you're interested in using with your child
- Pick a day and time that you'd like to sit down with your child and watch or play together. Consider what an ideal joint media experience would look like for you. (For example, a movie night cuddling up with your kid and meaningful chats without phones or other distractions)
- Would the C-R-O-W-D and P-E-E-R resources (or both) work well with your choice?
- Come up with some questions or ideas for how you would use these ideas to spark conversation with your child
- Finally, do it with your child at home next week

Wrap-up: (5 minutes)
- Final Discussion
  » Did you learn what you were hoping to get from the session? If not, did you learn something else useful?
- Round Robin:
  » What is one thing that you will take away from our time together today?
- Encourage parents to commit to trying the handouts at home
  » Remember to watch or play with your child this week
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

Welcome Participants: (10 Minutes)
If you are offering the videos as a series to the same group, you may not need to go over names and names of children, but it doesn't hurt if you have a larger group or if you may have new members.

- Share a little bit about yourself
  Ask participants to share
    » Their name
    » The names, ages and gender of the children in their lives
    » What they want to learn or get from the session
    » What rules did your family have about TV and screen use when you were a child?

Make sure that you prepare participants to keep their responses brief. Have the questions on display somewhere, if possible, so they don't have to try to remember them while they are answering. Ask them to give their best 30 second introduction. It will invariably take longer.

Warm-up discussion question: (10-15 minutes)
What is your biggest struggle with your child about media use?

You can have a discussion with the whole group, or, if the group is large, divide them into pairs or smaller groups and have them discuss for 5 minutes. You can also ask the smaller groups to share their main ideas with the larger group, depending on your timeframe. Make sure to note or even write down the concerns the group has in common.

Share Overview of what they will hear in Video 5: (2 minutes)
How to use a Family Media Plan: Introducing, setting up and choosing priorities.

Show Video 5: (10 minutes)

Go Over Key Takeaways from the Video: (2 minutes)
- A Family Media Plan is a helpful tool for including all family members in creating and sticking to your media rules and limits in the house
- Potential priorities to focus on in your family media plan:
    » Balancing screen time with off-screen play
    » Setting media time limits and turning off devices when not in use
    » Having regular conversations with kids about screen time and what they see
    » Creating screen-free times and areas
    » Choosing high-quality media options
    » Using media together as a family

Follow-up Discussion: (10 - 20 minutes)**:**
You can choose from the following questions. You do not need to use them all and probably will not have enough time to do so.

Discussion Questions for Parents:
- We talked about one of the challenges you encounter with screen use in your home earlier, how could a media plan help with these challenges?
- The video outlined six priorities. Which of these priorities do you already use in your home and in what way?
- Does everyone in the family follow these family rules/priorities?
- Which priorities did you choose to focus on for your family?
- How could you use these priorities to make screen time healthy for the whole family? (*Activity below is follow-up to this question.*)
- What was one of the most surprising things you learned from the video?
- What was one of the most helpful things you learned from the video?
- What, if anything, in the video concerned you?
- What is one thing that you might want to try or do differently after watching the video?

If you are doing the session in 60 minutes.

Wrap-up: (8-10 minutes)
- Go through each of the handouts
  - » Family Media Plan
  - » Review Weekly Schedule and Media Menu
  - » Go over Media Token Template
  - » Holding Tech Boundaries Handout
- Encourage parents to create a media plan at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

If you are doing the session in 90 minutes.

Extension Activities for Parents (20 minutes)
- Go over the "Family Media Plan" (10 minutes with activity)
- Remember that the Weekly Schedule and the Media Menu Handouts that were introduced in earlier videos can help with some of the goals in your media plan
  If participants are not familiar with these handouts, you will have to go over them also.
- Another tool that can help you with the "Setting Media Limits" goal is TV or game tokens. Go over "Token Handout"
  - » How old do you think a child would need to be to understand the concept of tokens? (*Probably 3 or older. Definitely older if the token represents an amount of time. Let parents know that they can use a countdown timer to represent the amount of time. Children will be able to understand earlier.*)
  - » How many tokens do you think a child should get in a day?

Activity:

Can be done individually or in small groups/pairs

- On page 1 look at the goals checklist and choose 2 goals that you might like to work on as a family. Then go to those sections of media plan that correspond to each goal, read through the bulleted items and brainstorm one or two actions that you can take to meet that goal.
  Discussion:
  » Was it difficult to choose your goals? To think of some actions?
  » Will it be difficult to get the whole family onboard?
  » Do you think you will be able to expand your goals? Keep up with the actions you chose?
     (The next Handout will help them with maintaining some of the goals in The Media Plan)
- Go over the "Holding Tech Boundaries" Handout. (5 minutes with activity, unless pairs do both scripts)

Activity:

In pairs

- Have each pair choose the "Turning Devices Off" Script or the "Choosing Content" script
- Have one person be the child and one person be the parent and practice the script
- If there is more time, have them switch roles and use the other script

Discussion:
  » How did the scripts go?
  » Do you think they would work some of the time?

Wrap-up: (5 minutes)
- Final Discussion
  » Did you learn what you were hoping to get from the session? If not, did you learn something else useful?
- Round Robin:
  » What is one thing that you will take away from our time together today?
- Encourage parents to commit to trying their media plan at home
- Provide parents with the link to the website in case they would like to watch the same or other videos in the series on their own **https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/HealthyMediaHabitsvideos.aspx**

Healthy Media Habits Video Scripts and Handouts

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT Prevention Board

Video 1: Our Responsibility to Shape Children's Digital World

Overview
- Introduction
- Recommendations for Healthy Media Use from the AAP
- What Kids are Doing on Screens
- Research Findings on Current Media Use
- Strategies for Managing Children's Screen Time

Video Script

Media is in every part of children's lives. As adults, technology is almost always with us. It's in our homes, our cars, and in our pockets. The same is becoming true for kids. In fact, by the time the average child graduates high school in America, they will have spent more time using digital media than in a classroom. Let that sink in for a minute. Our kids will spend more time using media than they spend in a classroom. That's why it's so important to understand how to keep media use healthy.

We're Dr. Roxy Etta and Dr. Liz Horgan. We're moms with PhD degrees in child development. Our research focus is on children's media. It can take up to 17 years for research to make it to the public. This is a huge problem, especially when it comes to research about kids' media. We want to fix this problem. We're here to teach you the newest research about kids and media. In this video series, you'll learn the newest information and gain the confidence to guide digital media use for children in your care. We'll use the term "caregiver" to refer to both parents (primary caregivers) *and* childcare providers.

There is a lot of media content out there for kids. But not all content that claims to be "for kids" is appropriate or even healthy. With all of the options, it can be overwhelming to figure out what is right. Research shows that most caregivers feel worried about the way kids are using screens. If you're worried about early media use, you're not alone. But there's good news! There are clear steps you can follow to guide early media use.

Think of yourself as a "media mentor" for the children in your care. They look to you to guide their media use. The goal is to help children in a way that benefits development and teaches healthy media habits. We'll give you the knowledge and skills to become a great media mentor.

First, we'll cover the general recommendations for children's media use.

"Screen media" or "digital media" means activities on an electronic device. These are devices like TVs, computers, tablets, and phones. Activities on screen media include watching videos, using apps, and playing games. We sometimes call these activities "screen time".

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no screen media for children under 18 months. The exception to this is video chat. Video chat, like Facetime and Skype, is good for children of all ages. Video chat can help build social bonds with far-away loved ones, and is not considered "screen time".

Caregivers can introduce some screen time between the ages of 18-24 months. It is strongly encouraged that adults use media together with children at this age, and only show high-quality content.

The AAP also says children between the ages of 2-5 years old should aim to use one hour or less of media per day. If your child care center uses mobile devices as part of early learning or other activities, be sure to inform parents about the amount of screen time used by their child each day. Children 5 and older should aim for 2 hours or less of screen media.

These are general guidelines, but provide a helpful starting point for thinking about your role as a media mentor. The time limits matter, but the content and context, or what, how, and why, of the media use are also important.

Yes, one hour per day is a good goal for children's screen time. But what matters more than the amount of screen time is what the rest of the child's day looks like. Did they get enough sleep? Were they able to have free play time, and ideally some time outdoors? Have they eaten enough? Have they had face-to-face interactions with a caregiver? By thinking through the big picture of a child's day and making sure they have enough of the experiences that matter most, the places where screen time fits into the gaps have less of an impact. You'll have the opportunity to think through a child's day with our daily scheduling worksheet after this video.

Next, we'll tell you about some current research about what kids are doing on screens.

A recent survey found that 98% of children in America have access to a smartphone or tablet in their homes. This is true for children across income levels. Half of toddlers and preschoolers own a mobile device of their own. Young kids spend about two and a half hours per day on screens, on average. But the AAP recommends an hour per day or less for children ages 2-5. This means that young children are spending more than DOUBLE the recommended amount of time on screens every single day. The concern with too much screen time for young children is that it might be taking away time that could be spent doing other important activities, like playing, sleeping, physical activity, and reading books with a caregiver.

So we know that they're spending a lot of time on media, but what are young children doing on screens? Kids are mainly watching shows and videos. Around 73% of children's screen time is spent on TV and video viewing, 16% is on apps and gaming, and the rest of the time is spent doing activities like reading e-books.

When they're watching videos, children spend the most time watching things online. 37% of children's video watching is online, like on YouTube. 29% of video watching is using services like Netflix and Hulu. 23% is the more classic form of watching TV through live, recorded, or on-demand television. The final 11% of kids' video watching is DVDs or pre-recorded movies.

Mobile devices like smartphones have changed the game for kids' screen time. Content is available all the time and easy to access. Unfortunately, a lot of online content is also designed to keep kids' eyes on the screen. Video creators make money based on views. This makes it challenging to create a healthy online media environment for kids. It's important to be aware of things like app algorithms, or the special software that helps an app decide what to show your child. Features like auto-play can also cause children to see content that may not be appropriate. Another problem is advertisements, that may target kids or may show them inappropriate content.

It's more important than ever to be on top of children's media use as much as we can. As busy caregivers, it's not always possible to be there for all of a child's screen time. But, there are strategies you can use to help manage screen time and set realistic limits to keep your child safe and healthy.

Parental (or caregiver) mediation refers to the strategies caregivers use to guide their children's digital media use to increase benefits and decrease risk. Mediation means the ways that you control, supervise, or help your child or children understand the media they see. This includes things like what devices a child can use, what content you allow them to see, and which places and times media is allowed. The way you think about media and the choices you make about media use are the main things that control your child's media experience.

Many adults start with an approach known as ***restrictive mediation.*** This is when you set and enforce rules around screens to limit access or reduce time spent on media. However, research has found that only setting rules is not enough to positively impact your child's screen use.

Instead of only setting rules and limits, research suggests that the best strategy for guiding a child's media use is talking about media with them regularly. This is known as ***active mediation***. In active mediation, there are still firm rules and boundaries, but they are regularly explained and discussed to help the child understand. Regular discussion of the rules helps children begin to create their own understanding of healthy screen use. You do not need to let the child help make the rules, and they do not have to agree to the rules either. However, research shows

that ongoing communication with children about their media use is the best way to manage screen time.

One active mediation strategy we like is setting up some media-free areas in your home or childcare center. Once you decide the areas where technology is not allowed, then explain to the children not only where screens aren't allowed but also why. This could look like saying "We don't use screens in the kitchen because that's where we eat. We want to focus on the meal and our time together rather than being distracted by what's on the screen."

Another important part of active mediation is using media together with children. These shared media times can look different depending on the situation. Sometimes it means sitting down together to watch a show and actively talking about what is on screen. This is called "joint media engagement". You can also let them watch a show alone and then ask questions about it after the fact to be involved.

Active mediation means being hands-on with children's media use and talking about their media experiences often. You'll have a chance to think about your current mediation style in the activities that follow this video. Don't miss our "Active Mediation Strategies" guide for more concrete strategies about being involved in kids' media use. Practice these strategies and come back next time ready to chat about how it went!

One of our favorite active mediation strategies is to create a media menu showing children what content they are allowed to use (based on your limits). Check out our example media menu, and think about what you might want to offer as options. We'll talk more about how to find high-quality media options in a future video!

Key Takeaways

- Young children spend double the amount of recommended time on screens and mainly spend their time watching shows and videos The AAP recommends no screen time for children under 18 months, except for video chat which is okay for kids of all ages
- Children 18-24 months can have some high-quality screen time with an adult
- Children ages 2-5 should aim for one hour or less of screen time per day
- The content and context of media use are important, not just the amount of time

Discussion Questions & Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Parents
- What were your own media experiences like as a child?
- How did your own media experience compare with the way kids are using media today?

Extension Activities for Parents
- *What is Your Mediation Style*? - self-assessment
- *Active Mediation Ideas* - guide
- *Daily Scheduling* - worksheet
- *Sample Media Menu* - worksheet

Discussion Questions for Childcare Professionals
- How do you think about behavior mediation more generally with children's activities at your center?
- Have you ever thought about your mediation practices when it comes to screens?

Extension Activities for Childcare Professionals
- *What is Your Mediation Style*? - self-assessment
- *Active Mediation Ideas* - guide
- *Daily Scheduling* - worksheet
- *Sample Media Menu* - worksheet

WHAT IS YOUR MEDIATION STYLE?

There's no one right way to raise kids. It's all about balancing risks and benefits. With that in mind, research shows that _active mediation_ is the best way to teach healthy media habits. Use this quiz to help you see how you manage media in your home or childcare center. "Kids" refers to any children in your care.

To take the quiz, read each statement and write a number 1-5 next to it based on how much you agree. After rating the statements in each section, add together the numbers to find your section total.

When you're finished, head to the last page to learn about your current mediation practices!

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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SECTION ONE

I explain how much time my kids are allowed to spend on screens and tell them why.

My kids and I talk about when and where screens are okay, and when they are not okay.

My kids see that I can manage my own screen time in a healthy way.

My kids and I often use media together and talk about it while it is happening.

I explain what shows and apps are appropriate for my kids and help them find good options.

In front of my kids, I only watch or use child-appropriate content.

SECTION ONE TOTAL SCORE

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SECTION TWO

My kids do not need me to be part of their screen time, they know what to do on their own.

I let my kids use screens whenever they want.

I do not think there are many risks to screen use.

I often give my kids screen time when they need to be entertained or calmed down.

I use screen time like a babysitter so that I can do other things while my kids are busy.

I want my kids to use technology as much as possible so they're ready for the future.

SECTION TWO TOTAL SCORE

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SECTION THREE

I pay attention to how much time my kids spends on screens.

Our family (or center) has rules about screen time.

I do not let my kids use screens for longer than they are allowed to.

I notice what my kids watch and do on screens.

We have rules about what my kids are and are not allowed to watch.

We have rules about when and where my kids are and are not allowed to use screens.

SECTION THREE TOTAL SCORE

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WHAT IS YOUR MEDIATION STYLE?

SECTION ONE	SECTION TWO	SECTION THREE
Active Mediation	Risky Mediation Practices	Restrictive Mediation
My score:	My score:	My score:

This is a starting point for you to notice how you are practicing mediation right now. No guilt, no blame. Finding any areas to work on is the first step toward healthy media use for the children in your care.

The goal is to have the highest score in the **Active Mediation** category and a low or zero score in **Risky Mediation Practices**. If you scored high on **Restrictive Mediation**, that means you have done a great job setting rules and limits! The next step is regularly talking to kids about their media use to help them understand healthy boundaries.

Check out the **Ideas for Practicing Active Mediation Guide** for tips on how to talk to kids about media rules and set them up for a lifetime of healthy media habits.

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IDEAS FOR PRACTICING
ACTIVE MEDIATION

VISUALIZE

Help children understand which media options are okay. Try using flash cards with print-outs of apps or shows and videos to create a menu showing what they are allowed to use.

CURATE

Explain to children what content they are allowed to use and why. Give them specific examples of what they can watch or play and describe why you are choosing it.

MODEL

Model positive media use by only using appropriate content when children are around.

SAY WHEN & WHERE

Discuss when and where children are allowed to use screens and stick to the limit. For example, "There are no screens allowed at mealtime, near bedtime, or in the bedroom."

DEBRIEF

Talk to children about what they saw on screen and how it made them feel.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

MEDIA MENU EXAMPLE
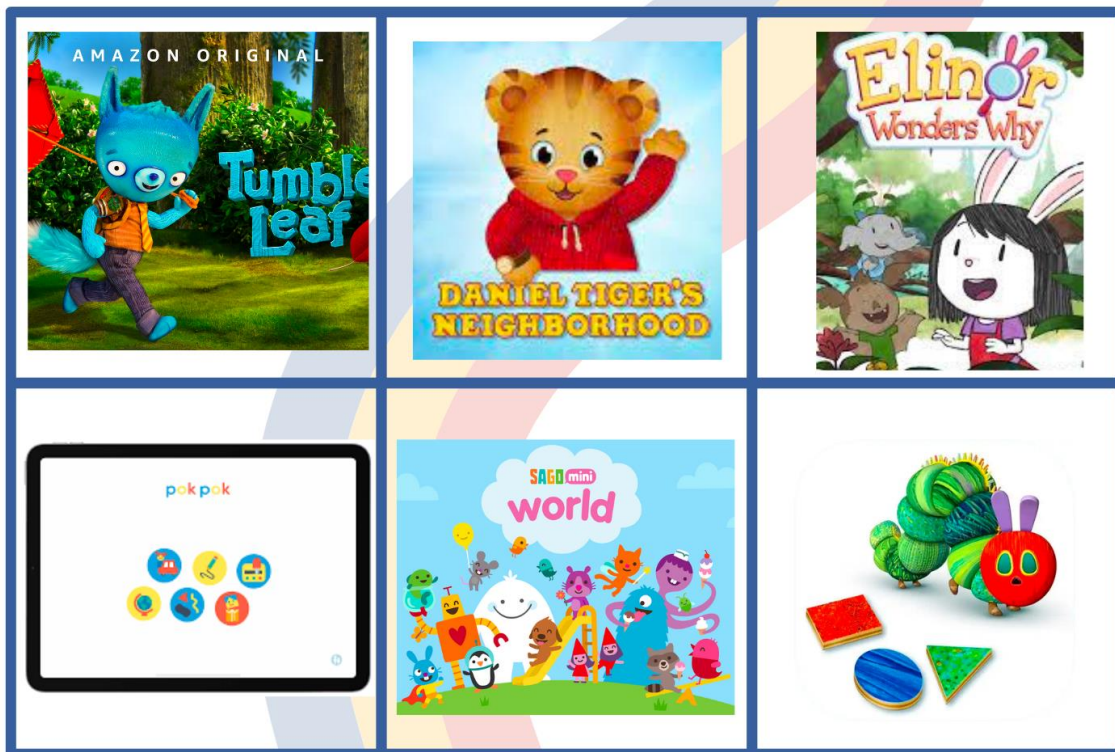
Use the grid on the next page to create a visual "media menu" for children. Copy images of the shows and/or apps you have chosen for them to use and paste them into the squares.

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MEDIA MENU TEMPLATE

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WEEKDAY SCHEDULE FOR:

6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

DAILY TIME GOALS

SLEEP	11 to 14 hours (ages 1-2), 10-13 hours (ages 3-5)
OUTSIDE PLAY	At least 30 minutes per day, ideally spending more time outside than on screens each day
SCREEN TIME	Less than one hour daily of high-quality educational content

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WEEKEND SCHEDULE FOR:

Time	
6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

DAILY TIME GOALS

SLEEP	11 to 14 hours (ages 1-2), 10-13 hours (ages 3-5)
OUTSIDE PLAY	At least 30 minutes per day, ideally spending more time outside than on screens each day
SCREEN TIME	Less than one hour daily of high-quality educational content

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Video 2: The Risks and Benefits of Screens

Overview:
- Part 1: The Negatives of Screens for Kids
  - Potential Harms of Media Overuse
  - Impact of Background TV
  - Influences of Adult Tech Use
  - Impact of Screens on Child Behavior
- Part 2: The Positives of Screens for Kids
  - Bonding with Caregivers
  - Developing Parasocial Relationships
  - Learning and Play

Video Script

Part 1: The Negatives of Screens for Kids

There are a lot of opinions out there about young children's media use. But there is a lot of research, too. Research tells us that screens can't teach your child everything they need to know, but they also aren't rotting their brains. The answer is in the middle, and it's all about balancing risk and reward. Let's unpack the research about the pros and cons of screen use for kids.

There is a lot of talk about health and development concerns related to children's digital media use. We need to cover these topics so you understand everything we currently know about children and screens. However, please do not let this information cause you guilt or fear. Screens will _not_ rot your child's brain. Digital media itself is not the main issue, but rather *how* media is used. The majority of the research studies we will cover are largely about using media in *unhealthy* ways, including *excessive* media use or watching *inappropriate* types of content. Many of these studies show a connection between media and problems without proving that one thing causes another. But this information is helpful because it teaches us how to balance the good and bad sides of using screens.

The first concern related to media use in childhood is **obesity**. Research shows that screen time can be linked with increases in weight for preschoolers. One study of 2-year-old children found that higher body mass index numbers (BMI) were linked with more time spent watching television shows with commercials. There are a few possible reasons for this link. Children might see more food ads when watching shows with commercials. Seeing food ads might cause

them to ask for the foods they saw and eat more foods that are high in calories. Another possibility is that using screens while eating distracts kids from being able to tell when their body is full, which leads to overeating. A third possibility is that screen use may be taking the place of exercise and play. Some studies say this doesn't happen often, and that screen time mostly takes the place of other inactive things, like doing puzzles or reading. But it's still worth thinking about what screen time might be replacing in your child's day. We'll talk more about how to prevent these issues when we make a media plan together.

A second health concern related to young children's screen time is **sleep.** More media use is linked with less sleep for kids. Having a screen (like a TV, computer, or phone) in a child's bedroom is linked to fewer minutes of sleep each night. Screens might affect sleep because they're seen as exciting devices for kids. Another possibility is that blue light from screens affects the chemicals in their brain to make them less sleepy. The best way to avoid these types of problems is to keep screens out of the bedroom and reduce screen time in the hours before bedtime. Avoid making screens a part of the bedtime routine.

A third health concern about media is whether or not it impacts children's **brain development**. Research has found links between screen time and delays in development. There are links between regularly using media before 18 months old, having too much screen time each day (more than 2 hours a day), and watching inappropriate media content with delays in brain functioning for preschoolers. One area of young brains that is especially impacted by too much screen time is **language development**. This is likely because when screens are on, caregivers are less likely to talk to young children. One study found that when a TV is on, parents say 39% fewer words to their child. This is extremely important because parents speaking to their children is the main way kids learn early language.

There is a lot of research looking at how screens can interrupt caregiver-child time together. Studies show that **background TV**, or having the TV on in the background when nobody is actively watching, takes attention away from talking with your child. This can also lead to fewer words spoken by caregivers to a child. Also, background TV can be distracting for kids and lead to less time playing. When possible, turn off the TV!

We're not telling you any of this to scare you. It's important to know the facts and to aim for one hour or less per day of screen time when possible. But we recognize that following screen time recommendations all the time is not realistic for many families. Above all else, remember that kids learn and grow best from in-person interactions with their caregivers. Even the highest-quality screen content cannot replace this. You matter the most!

On that note, there is a growing area of research about something called **technoference**. Technoference is when screens disrupt real face-to-face interactions. It's when you are paying attention to your phone and not to the people around you. This often causes caregivers to miss children trying to interact, like a toddler asking a question or a baby cooing at you. Research

shows that when caregivers are on their phones it lowers all types of caregiver-child communication. Caregivers who are too caught up in a screen are slow to reply to children, misunderstand what a child needs, and react more harshly to their children. When caregivers use screens a lot, it is linked to worse behaviors from children and negative feelings for kids like aggression and sadness.

There is a lot of research on how screen time influences children's **behavior**. Children easily copy the behaviors they see on screen, including negative behaviors like hurting others. When kids see aggression, violence, bad language, emotional outbursts, stealing, or risky behaviors, they may try to copy those behaviors. The more loud and flashy these negative behaviors are on screen, the more kids are going to pay attention and try to copy. Even if the negative behaviors are corrected later, children hold onto the negative things they saw and miss the bigger lesson.

What your child is watching or using on-screen makes a big difference. Even if screen time amounts change from day to day, you can stay in charge of the type and quality of shows that your kids see. Educational media content is the best option for young children. One research study found that switching out violent media for educational media caused positive changes in kids' behavior after screen time. Another study found that watching educational media content and having a caregiver actively setting limits and talking about screen time led to positive changes in brain development.

It's important to remember that all kids are unique and that media affects each child differently. But you are the expert on children in your care and are the best person to make healthy media decisions for them.

Part 2: The Positives of Screens for Kids

Now that you know about some of the risks and how to avoid them, let's talk about the benefits of screen time for kids. Did you know that there is an area of research working to find ways to make screen time beneficial? Researchers like us know many caregivers rely on screens as a tool. There are exciting social, creative, interactive, and educational possibilities for young children that can come from healthy screen use.

One benefit of screen time is bonding. When adults and children use media **together**, like watching TV shows or playing video games, it can strengthen their bond. Yes, screen time can be quality time! This happens through *joint media engagement.* This is when an adult actively participates in a child's media experience by asking questions, making connections, or sharing personal experiences about the media content. We'll talk more about this in our third set of videos. This type of media interaction shows interest and support to the child, which creates a feeling of connection. A bonus is that using media together can also give you ideas for follow-up conversations or ways to play together when the shared screen time is over.

Starting around age two, children can also start to bond with characters on screen. These "friendships" often happen when a child sees the same character multiple times and likes them. Children may begin to connect with the media character's emotions and experiences. They may talk about characters as if they are their real friends, and find familiar characters comforting. When your child is watching educational content these on-screen relationships can be a helpful tool. Media characters that your child connects with can serve as role models. For example, they may show positive examples of embracing diversity and skills like kindness, emotion control, and problem-solving.

Children ages two and older can learn many skills from educational TV. Research shows the benefits of educational TV programs for language, literacy, math, science, creativity, and social-emotional skills in preschool and later. Networks like PBS Kids make educational content free and widely available. Research has even found that watching high-quality educational TV in the preschool years predicts both kindergarten readiness AND academic achievement in *high school*! Choosing high-quality media content for children when they're young can help give them a strong base of knowledge to grow for years to come.

So far, we've been talking about the benefits of TV. That's because research about apps is much newer. Educational TV has been around since the 1970s, but the first iPad was not available until 2010! Even though it is new, research suggests that children learn differently from apps than they do from videos. Some research shows that apps are the most helpful for learning when they teach science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) lessons. Apps and interactive e-books can also support language learning by helping children practice letters, phonics, and sight words.

The benefits of screen time are different for each child and change with each media experience. A lot of it depends on your goals as the caregiver. Every time you turn on a screen…1. think about why you are offering screen time,2. remember the risks, and 3. make choices to support the benefits. In our research, we found there are many reasons caregivers use media. Sometimes it is used to entertain children or to keep them safely occupied. Other times media is used to bond. Another reason caregivers offer screen time is to educate and teach their children. These are all valid!

While your reasons for using media will change from day to day, the research agrees that children over two years old can and do learn from high-quality educational media. Our next video will cover how to select high-quality options for your kids!

Key Takeaways

- Caregivers should consider their goals when offering screen time and make choices to support the benefits of screens while being aware of the risks

- Excessive screen time is linked to obesity, sleep problems, and delays in brain development
- Screens can interrupt caregiver-child interactions in a negative way
- Joint media engagement can help children learn from media and support bonding
- Educational media can help children learn language, literacy, math, science, creativity, and social-emotional skills

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Discussion Questions & Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Parents:
- Have you seen children imitate behaviors from a TV show or movie?
- Have you used media to help your child learn? If you can think of a specific experience, how did it go?
- Do you think the possible benefits of screen time balance out the risks? What are some ways you can increase the benefits and reduce the risks for yourself and your children?

Extension Activities for Parents:
- Think about your media habits. Make your best guess about the amount of media you use each day, and what types. Do you have any concerns or challenges you see with your own media use? Then fill out a *Media Use Diary Entry* about your actual media use for one day. Compare your actual media use to your guess.
- Think about your child's media use habits. Make your best guess about the amount and types of media they use each day. Do you have any concerns or challenges you see with your children's media use? Then observe your child's actual media use for one day and fill out a *Media Use Diary* entry for your child. Compare your children's actual media use to your previous guess.

Discussion Questions for Childcare Professionals:
- Have you seen children imitate behaviors from a TV show or movie?
- Have you used media to teach children in your care? If you can think of a specific experience, how did it go?
- Do you use screens while you are with the children each day? In what ways do you hope to balance the risks and benefits of screens for yourself and the children in your care?

Extension Activities for Childcare Professionals:
- Think about your own media use habits. Take your best guess on the amount and types of media you consume. Do you have any concerns or challenges you see with your media use? Complete a *Media Use Diary Entry* for one day and compare your actual media use to your previous guess.
- Think about the media use habits of the children in your care. Make your best guess about the amount and types of media they use. Do you have any concerns or challenges with their media use? Complete a *Media Use Diary Entry* for a specific child or generally for the children in your care one day and compare children's actual media use to media use recommendations.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN MEDIA USE:

What's your best guess of your total media time each day? Think about:

- How much TV/videos/YouTube you watch
- How many times you check your phone each day
- How much time you spend on social media
- If you use screens for work

Are you worried about your own screen use?

MEDIA USE TYPES

VIDEO WATCHING	Examples: watching tv, movies, streaming online videos, etc.
COMMUNICATION	Examples: texting, videochatting, emailing, etc.
SOCIAL MEDIA	Examples: using apps like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.
APPS & GAMES	Examples: playing video games, using game-based apps, etc.

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MEDIA USE DIARY ENTRY FOR YOURSELF

6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

MEDIA USE TYPES

VIDEO VIEWING	**Examples: watching tv, movies, streaming online videos, etc.**
COMMUNICATION	**Examples: texting, videochatting, emailing, etc.**
SOCIAL MEDIA	**Examples: using apps like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.**
GAMING	**Examples: playing video games, using game-based apps, etc.**

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THINK ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S MEDIA USE:

What's your best guess of your child's total media time each day? Think about:

• How much TV/videos/Youtube they watch
• How much time they spend using apps
• Whether they have their own device

Are you worried about anything with your child's screen use?

MEDIA USE TYPES

VIDEO WATCHING	Examples: watching tv, movies, streaming online videos, etc.
COMMUNICATION	Examples: texting, videochatting, emailing, etc.
SOCIAL MEDIA	Examples: using apps like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.
APPS & GAMES	Examples: playing video games, using game-based apps, etc.

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MEDIA USE DIARY ENTRY FOR CHILDREN

6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

MEDIA USE TYPES

VIDEO VIEWING	**Examples: watching tv, movies, streaming online videos, etc.**
COMMUNICATION	**Examples: texting, videochatting, emailing, etc.**
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APPS & GAMING	**Examples: playing video games, using game-based apps, etc.**

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Video 3: Evaluating Media Content & Choosing High-Quality Options

Overview:

3.1 High-Quality TV Shows, Videos, and Movies
- Content Matters–Children Copy What They See
- What to look for and what to avoid

3.2 High-Quality Apps and eBooks
- What to look for and what to avoid

3.1 Video Script - High-Quality TV Shows, Videos, and Movies

The videos and apps that kids watch and play are important. Choosing good content can be hard, but we're here to help. We've studied the research on videos and apps for kids, and have created simple lists to show you what to look for. These lists are based on many years of research about what works (and what doesn't!) for kids in media. You can use the lists to help you decide which videos and apps you want your kids to use. Think of it like picking out foods for your pantry. You shop and bring home the foods that you want them to eat, instead of letting your kids have anything from the store. Just like some foods are better for you than others, there are some videos and apps that are better for kids. We'll help you find the good, educational ones, and you can choose what's best for your family or childcare center. A blanket recommendation for both videos and apps is to choose things that don't annoy you, the caregiver, so you are more likely to use media along with the child.

The first list will cover what to look for in videos that kids watch, and the second list will cover apps.

High-Quality Videos, Shows, and Movies

It might surprise you to hear that watching shows and videos isn't easy for kids. It's more than just sitting back and relaxing! It takes a lot of brainpower and skills for kids to learn from video. When kids seem like they're just staring at a screen, they're really focused on what's happening in the video. Their brains are busy trying to understand what they see, connect it to what they know, and make memories with it. Since watching videos can be a great opportunity for kids to learn, it's important to pick the right videos for them.

Before we start looking for high-quality videos, there are two things to remember. First, not every show or video advertised for kids is actually good for them. Some shows, including shows on public TV like PBS Kids, have teams of people who work hard to make them educational. PBS

Kids is always a useful place to start when looking for good shows and videos for young kids. But others, like many videos on YouTube, are just made to be fun, keep their eyes on the screen, and make money. Second, even videos that say they're educational are not all the same. Some are better at helping kids learn than others. Unfortunately, there isn't a system that rates the educational quality of videos for kids. It's up to parents, caregivers, and educators to decide what's best.

There are a lot of places where children can watch videos—on different apps, channels, and streaming services. But having many options isn't always better, or even necessary Research shows that kids actually learn more from videos when they watch the same show or episodes over and over. You don't need to get every streaming service out there or let children watch tons of different shows. Once you find good choices that work for you, you can stick with those. For example, my three-year-old twins have been watching the same few shows for over a year now, and they're still interested in and learning from them.

Another important thing to consider is the device a child is using while watching videos. Research tells us that it's best for kids to watch videos on a TV screen that stays in one spot in your home. This could be somewhere like in the living room or playroom. There are a few reasons for this. First, it's easier to keep an eye on the child. When they're watching on TV, you know they'll probably stay in one place. Plus, because the TV is a larger device and doesn't need to be held, it's more likely that you or another adult or sibling can watch with them. Even if you step out of the room, you can still hear what they are watching and check on them easily. You can also keep the remote with you so they can't switch to something you don't want them to see. Also, research shows that watching videos on phones or tablets can be frustrating for kids. They may accidentally press buttons or find content you don't want them to see. And if they get used to watching on a phone, they might keep asking to use your phone to watch things later on.

So when possible, encourage children to watch videos on a TV. If you don't have a TV or if you're on the go, the next best choice is a tablet, especially if it's a tablet that isn't used often at home. That way it can be kept out of sight when the child isn't using it, like in a closet or high on a shelf. Putting the tablet out of sight helps keep it out of mind for young kids. Letting children watch videos on a phone should be the last resort. When in a pinch, your phone can be a helpful option to keep a child entertained, but we recommend not using it regularly.

For the first time ever, young children are spending most of their screen time watching online videos, averaging about 39 minutes per day on sites like YouTube. About one-third of children watch online videos every single day. YouTube is very different from TV because the content is created by individual people, which makes it difficult to monitor and control. From branded unboxing videos to family vlogs to watching others play with toys or games, the majority of YouTube videos are not great options for kids. YouTube has been criticized for not monitoring content and for automatically playing videos that may not be appropriate. YouTube has also illegally collected data from child viewers without consent, which is concerning.

A study of young children's YouTube viewing history found that 85 percent of the videos they watched were product advertisements, and about 20 percent showed highly inappropriate material such as violence or sexual content. Even videos marked as "age-appropriate" often include advertisements that are not good for children. Also, 75% of the videos children watch on YouTube have little to no educational value. With this in mind, it's important to use caution and be very involved if you allow children to watch anything on YouTube.

When it comes to choosing high-quality videos for your kids, it's not just about finding content that is right for their age. It's also about making choices that are both educational and entertaining. But how can you do that?

What to Avoid

The only rating system available for shows and movies is the Motion Picture Association rating system of G, PG, R and NC 17 for movies. This is only helpful for letting parents know what not to let their children see and not what is good for them to watch. Just because something is rated G doesn't mean it is high-quality, educational, or even appropriate for children. It's important to look beyond these ratings, consider recommendations from reliable sources, and decide for yourself. To help you, we've put together a handy checklist of what to look for in kids' TV shows and movies. In the next section about what to look for, we'll go over what's in the checklist. Please feel free to just listen along for this section, since it's all written down for you on the checklist. One note– we won't be talking about video games or gaming systems because we do not recommend traditional video games for younger children. If you do choose to let your child play or watch video games, try to limit it to games rated "E is for Everyone". Please know that even games rated for "everyone" may still have some violence or mild language.

The very first thing to think about when selecting shows or videos for children is whether or not they are geared for their age. There are three big things to avoid in videos for young children - content that's too scary, violent, or hateful. This applies not only to realistic content with actual people but also to cartoons and fantasy worlds too. Young children have a hard time telling the difference between make-believe and what is real, so even if a video is set in an unrealistic world, a child can still learn from it and be afraid. Many parents have noticed that their child is very interested in villains, monsters, fighting, and so on. It's not surprising, because fear and excitement can feel very similar in the body. Watching scary stuff might feel thrilling to kids at the moment, but at what cost? Let's talk about that more.

Let's start with what's scary to kids. Just because something doesn't seem frightening to you doesn't mean it isn't for a child. And what scares young children in media might surprise you. Young kids fear both real things like darkness and large animals, as well as imaginary things like monsters and dragons. They are also likely to be afraid of something that looks scary but is *actually harmless*, like ET the extraterrestrial. He's a nice character but just looks a little scary. Young children are likely to remember scary things after the video is over. Research shows that seeing things that scare them when they are young can affect behaviors like sleep, and these effects can last into adulthood. Check out our **What's Scary for Children PDF** to see what might

be scary for kids of different ages and a **Five-Step Script PDF** to use if a child sees something scary in media.

Next, let's talk about violence. Kids copy what they see. Violence is exciting for kids to watch and very easy to repeat. Research shows that even if the characters get in trouble or are corrected as part of a larger lesson, kids still copy it. There is a lot of research that tells us it is common for children to copy violence they see in media content, with effects lasting even into adulthood. So it's best to try to pick content for your kids that isn't filled with violence. Even if it seems boring to you, it will be better for your kids.

Not only should physically violent content be avoided, but hateful words too. Things like teasing, bullying, and leaving others out are often used to teach lessons in children's media content, but young kids have a hard time understanding these lessons. Research shows that children are very literal in their learning from media. They have a tough time not only understanding complicated moral lessons like these but also applying them to real-life situations. Given how easily children copy behaviors they see on screen, we suggest choosing content that only shows appropriate behaviors. We'll talk more about that in the next section.

One last thing we want to avoid is overly stimulating content. This means videos that are far too attention-grabbing and flashy, with fast pace, bright colors, and overlapping sound effects. An example of this is something like Wheel of Fortune. It's probably really fun for a young child to look at but it doesn't mean much to them. It's just simply keeping their eyes on the screen with visuals and sounds. We want children's attention to be captured by good storylines and educational lessons, not flashy animations. Now that we've covered what to avoid, let's turn next and discuss one of my favorite topics, what to look for in your search for high-quality video.

What to Look For

When reviewing children's video content you want to look at three main things - the behaviors, the design, and the themes. These will all be included in the checksheet in a simple format so you can just listen along. Let's dive in and break these down.

First, let's talk about the design of the show. There are many design features to look for that help children learn from screens. We'll cover a few big ones. First, a video that has a SLOWER pace with FEWER scene cuts will be easier for children to understand and make meaning from. Scene cuts are where the image on screen or the camera angle changes. This looks like motion on screen, and the less motion the easier it is for kids to understand what's happening. It's also important that audio and sound effects are used in meaningful ways that match the video content. Showing a character talking at a normal pace is better than a narrator overlapped with attention-grabbing sound effects and a montage of clips stitched together. Also, repetition is an important design feature for young children. Important learning goals should be repeated throughout the show, ideally with some different examples. For example, if the target lesson is

to understand how shadows work, showing a shadow on multiple objects or surfaces would be a great variation to show that shadows can occur on many things. Repeating the lesson with some variation allows children to create a more flexible understanding of that lesson that can more easily be applied to real life.

Another design feature to look for is called "breaking the fourth wall". This is when the characters on screen speak to the audience to break the barrier between the screen and the real world. When children reply to characters who are breaking the fourth wall, it makes TV viewing much more engaging and boosts learning. It can also be helpful to look for shows that have settings, situations, or lessons that are relatable to your child's life. It's easier to transfer a lesson from screen to the real world when they're similar to each other.

Next, let's look at behaviors in the show. Research suggests that it's important to select media content that shows positive behaviors. Children will copy what they see, so what do you want them to copy? I ask myself if I would be comfortable with the characters on a show talking and acting that way around my children in real life. Would I want my child to be spoken to the way the characters are speaking? Would I want them to be treated the way that characters are treated in the show? The top behaviors to look for are managing their feelings, problem-solving, curiosity, sharing, playing fairly, kindness and understanding how others feel. We recommend seeking shows that contain these types of positive behaviors.

The last element to consider in selecting high-quality video is themes. We suggest looking for shows that have educational themes. Education doesn't have to mean teaching science and math concepts, there is a lot of great video content that teaches children about feelings, social skills and healthy relationships with friends and families. Look for themes that are uniquely interesting to the children who will be watching, or for themes that you want them to learn. I personally enjoy educational curriculums that have strong play themes like creativity, adventure, and curiosity that can inspire play after video viewing is over.

3.2 Video Script - High-Quality Apps

Similar to video, just because an app is advertised as educational does not automatically make it a good choice. The way kids play while using the app affects what kids can do and learn. Many lower-quality apps are basically flashcards and teach simple memorization skills. These apps only offer one set way to play. While this is not necessarily a bad thing if you want your child to learn a specific skill or lesson, there are better types of apps for play. Higher-quality apps that offer open-ended play tend to encourage more flexible learning for kiddos. Open-ended apps do not have one correct way to play. They encourage children to create, explore, and discover. An example of an open-ended app could be as simple as a digital version of a drawing on a tablet. These open-ended play apps have more freedom and choices that encourage children to explore and learn something that excites them. They are often more fun too! Open-ended apps will also likely give you more bang for your buck because kiddos will be encouraged to play

longer as they have more options and can follow their interests. Even open-ended apps should have clear instructions or be easy to follow and figure out. Before giving your child an app, make sure they understand the basics of how to use the screen. Gestures like tapping, swiping, and dragging items on screen are important to many children's apps.

When it comes to selecting high-quality apps and games, you will also want to look at the game design and educational content. The design and content of an app drive what a child learns. When choosing apps, use the E-AIMS model—which means that apps should be *engaging* (with a clear storyline or lesson), *actively involved* (minds-on), *meaningful* (relatable to children's daily lives), and *social* (encourage interaction with others). These four pillars support a fun and challenging learning experience for young children. Let's break these down a little more. When looking at the app design, think about it being:

Engaging - To get a child interested, an app should have a story or general lesson. If you can figure out what it is trying to teach, that is a good sign that the app was made with an educational plan. For example, games in an app might teach kids about things that start with the same letter, or let them plant flowers and discover how plants grow. The learning part should be a central piece of how the game works, so kids use what they're learning to play or win. In other words, what kids do on the screen should primarily be focused on the lesson.

It's a common trend in children's apps to include many bells and whistles. This creates an exciting and flashy app that will sell and keep eyes on the screen. But less is more when it comes to teaching educational lessons. When distractions are limited, children can focus on the lesson and learn better. Imagine trying to read a book and repeatedly being interrupted by someone talking to you about something unrelated or telling you to touch a specific area of the page. It would frequently cause you to shift your focus and reduce your ability to understand what you're trying to accomplish. One of the biggest distractions to look out for in kids' apps is advertisements. Ads are extremely common in apps and vary widely in the products they are advertising. Additionally, they are typically unrelated to the goals of the app. Unfortunately, advertising is both more common and more frequent during gameplay in free apps compared to paid apps. Many free apps require children to watch an ad before they can continue playing, which can lead to distraction. Apps should also not make kids purchase items within the app to win or succeed.

The kind of app that's exciting and engaging to one child might be different than another child. All children are different. Some children will be more affected by distracting features than others. If you notice that a child is particularly distractible, try looking for apps with settings that include options like the ability to decrease visual noise, mute background music and sound effects, or change the pace at which animations occur.

Actively Involved- Research tells us that kids learn most when the game they are playing is a little bit of a challenge, pushing children in small ways to keep their minds at work. In an app, this means that there should ideally be a few game options or levels that can match different children's skill levels. As children improve in skill, they can "level up" throughout the game to keep them involved.

Meaningful- Children are ready to learn when the app's content and teaching style match their age and are relatable to their lives. To learn well, kids need to link what they're learning to what they already know and have experienced, so they can understand and remember it better. Just memorizing facts isn't enough; apps should make learning fun by letting kids practice skills in different ways. They can do this by connecting what's in the app to real life, like using real pictures instead of cartoons or using familiar places and characters to teach new things. For example, they might show kids how to measure things in a kitchen or compare the sizes of books in a library. When apps use things kids know, they can pay attention better and learn more.

Social- Similar to video, kids learn best when they use apps and games with a parent or caregiver. Apps are a fun way for both of you to play and learn new things together. You can be creative and explore together, especially with apps that let you do different things. Parents and caregivers can especially help with explaining the rules of the game, explaining the lesson, and relating it to real life. Another way apps can be social is by having options for playing with others, like friends or family, so kids can talk about what they're learning. Good learning apps should also suggest ways for parents to ask questions that get kids thinking, either by giving questions to ask during the game or suggesting things to talk about outside the app. But even if a child uses an app or game alone, they can interact with characters or talk about their play experience afterward. It can be helpful for children to play games that use characters from their favorite shows or books since they already feel connected to those characters.

To summarize, a great app will keep kids focused, hold their attention, and have relatable content for the child. Ideally, the app should have easy-to-use features that match the individual child's abilities.

Check out our **High-Quality Video PDF** and **High-Quality Apps PDF** for quick and easy summaries of our tips!

Key Takeaways

- Choosing good media content for kids is hard but also important for their development
- It's up to parents, caregivers, and educators to decide what media content is best
- Not every video or app advertised "for kids" or "educational" is actually good for them
- Kids learn more from videos when they watch the same show, movie, or episode over and over, so having many options isn't always better
- Watching videos on a TV that stays in one spot is best for children, followed by watching on a tablet, and the least preferred is giving children your phone
- Try to find apps and e-books that are interactive and engaging, with a clear storyline or lesson that is relatable to children's real lives
- When possible, use media with children to help support their learning and make sure the content is appropriate for their age

Discussion Questions & Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Parents

- How do you currently choose which videos and apps your children use?
- Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or learning after using certain videos or apps?
- How do you feel about the responsibility to ensure that children are exposed to high-quality, educational content? How might this responsibility be shared among parents, caregivers, educators, and media creators?

Extension Activities for Parents

- Visit the PBS Kids website and check out their list of current shows and apps. Choose one show and one app to test out with the **High-Quality Media Checklists**. Review the content and fill out the checklist as you go. Use this exercise to practice exploring how you want to make decisions about what is appropriate for your child or children.
- Revisit the **Media Menu** example that was shared with Video 1. Think about the shows and apps you'd like to offer to your child moving forward.

Discussion Questions for Childcare Providers:

- What resources do you currently use to find high-quality videos and apps for children in your care?
- How do you ensure that the videos and apps you provide are appropriate for the children's age and development level?
- How do you feel about the responsibility to ensure that children are exposed to high-quality, educational content? How might this responsibility be shared among parents, caregivers, educators, and media creators?

Extension Activities for Childcare Providers

- Visit the PBS Kids website and check out their list of current shows and apps. Choose one show and one app to test out with the **High-Quality Media Checklists**. Review the content and fill out the checklist as you go. Use this exercise to practice exploring how you want to choose appropriate content for the children in your care.
- Revisit the **Media Menu** example that was shared with Video 1. Think about the shows and apps you'd like to offer in your childcare center moving forward.

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HIGH-QUALITY CHECKLIST
FOR VIDEOS, SHOWS, & MOVIES

VIDEO DESIGN

- ☐ Slow, calm pace of action
- ☐ Scenes do not change quickly
- ☐ No flashy animations or loud sound effects
- ☐ Sounds and music match the images
- ☐ Lesson is repeated in different ways to help child remember
- ☐ Characters talk directly to the child sometimes
- ☐ Characters pause to let the child respond
- ☐ Doesn't annoy you as the caregiver ☺

BEHAVIORS & STORYLINE

- ☐ Story is easy to follow and clear
- ☐ Story is appropriate for the child's age and knowledge
- ☐ No scary, violent, or hateful behaviors or words
- ☐ Characters have positive and friendly behaviors
- ☐ Characters speak kindly
- ☐ Story shows familiar or realistic places and events for the child

THEMES & LESSON

- ☐ Has a specific educational theme or lesson
- ☐ Lesson is easy to identify
- ☐ Lesson is interesting to the child

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HIGH-QUALITY CHECKLIST
FOR APPS

APP DESIGN (E-AIMS)

- ☐ No distractions or extra bells and whistles
- ☐ Do not need to watch ads to keep playing
- ☐ Do not need to buy extra upgrades to win
- ☐ Child-led activities where the player gets to make choices
- ☐ Levels within the app get harder as they go
- ☐ Things in the game look realistic
- ☐ Situations in the game are familiar or similar to the child's life
- ☐ Familiar or repeated characters that the child can get to know
- ☐ Encourages playing together through multi-player or turn taking
- ☐ Doesn't annoy you as the caregiver ☺

GAMEPLAY

- ☐ Open-ended with multiple ways to play the game
- ☐ Rules and instructions are clear or app is easy to follow without instructions
- ☐ Gestures in the game (like swipe, tap) are things that the child is able to do

EDUCATIONAL LESSON

- ☐ Matches the child's interests
- ☐ Clear learning goal(s) or lessons
- ☐ Games and challenges fit the child's age and what they know
- ☐ Educational lessons are repeated in different ways

WHAT'S SCARY FOR KIDS AT **DIFFERENT AGES**

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

Keep in mind that this is based on the way children generally develop, and your individual child's experience may differ.

Ages 0-2

Fear loud noises, sudden movement, and strangers

Infants learn to notice when their caregiver is gone and begin to fear strangers. They only understand real-life, hands-on experiences.

Infancy

Sensorimotor Stage

Early Childhood

Preoperational Stage

Ages 2-7

Fear make-believe danger, dramatic changes, and scary appearances

Children in this age range begin to develop imagination and can start to guess what will happen next However, they cannot easily tell the difference between real and pretend.

Ages 7-12

Fear real events (disasters, losing a loved one) and suggested danger (spooky music, suspense)

By middle childhood, children can tell the difference between real and pretend. They can easily guess what will happen next and understand realistic dangers.

Middle Childhood

Concrete Operational Stage

Ages 12+

Fear human and world issues like loneliness, war, poverty, and global warming

Adolescents understand a bigger view of the world and can think about things they can't see. They can easily use both their own personal experiences and information they have heard from others.

Adolescence

Formal Operational Stage

WHAT TO SAY
IF YOUR CHILD SEES
SCARY STUFF

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

5-STEP SCRIPT

We get it, it happens.

Your kids might see something on a video or in a game that really scares them. But there are steps you can take to calm some of their fear and worry.

Use this script to guide you as you talk to them afterward.

Please feel free to change this script based on each child and their unique needs.

The key is to create a safe and open space for your child to share their feelings and for you to provide comfort and help them work through their fears.

1. Listen to their Feelings

Try not to say things like "Don't be scared!". Instead, just listen and talk about how they feel. For example, "I can see you're feeling worried. Do you want to tell me about it?" Listen and repeat back the feelings they describe.

2. Explain their Feelings

Explain why the child might feel scared by what they saw. For example, "That ice monster was really big and loud. I can see why that scared you."

3. Let them Know they are Safe

Explain to the child that what saw on screen is not a threat in real life and that they are safe. Say things like, "That ice monster is only in the movie, not here. Monsters actually aren't real, and I would never let anything like that near you. You are safe, it's my job to keep you safe."

4. Give them Tools for Next Time

Remind your child that if something feels too scary for them, they can use their words and tell an adult, look away, cuddle their lovey, etc.

5. Redirect their Attention

Change to talking about something positive. If possible, switch to a different activity and place. Stay close for a while. Your child is comforted by having you there. You could try to take them to play in a different part of the room or to read their favorite story, sit at the table and draw together, or go outside for a walk - whatever you and your child enjoy!

Video 4: Boosting the Benefits of Screen Time

Overview:
- Boosting the Benefits of Screen Media for Kids
- Joint Media Engagement
  - Before Media Use
  - During Media Use
  - After Media Use

Video Script

Boosting the Benefits of Screen Time for Kids

There are many things caregivers can do to help make screen time a positive experience for kids. Being aware of what they're watching, limiting negative content, and helping them choose educational options are all important. But the biggest thing you can do is to get involved with the child's screen time yourself. It's easy to assume that screen time is something kids do on their own. But research shows that children benefit more from screens when an adult helps guide them.

Ideally, a caregiver would be with children every single time they use a screen. This is not realistic for most people. Luckily, there are many ways you can support children's engagement and learning from media before, during, and after screen use. We'll share ideas about ways to boost the benefits of screen time in this video. If you choose even one or two of the suggestions to try, you can help make screen time a positive experience.

Before Media Use

Setting a child up to learn from screens starts with knowing the individual child's skill level. What do they understand about TV? How capable are they of using a touchscreen? At the most basic level, kids need to understand that images on a screen represent objects in the real world. Part of this knowledge develops over time and with experience. But you can help by explaining the connection between objects on screen and objects in your child's environment. For example, you can point out that a character on TV has a teddy bear, just like the child's teddy bear. Once a child understands that images on screen can represent real things in the world, they are more prepared to learn from screens.

Next, you can explore the child's interests. Children are active in their own learning. Their attention can be guided, or more easily focused on, things that they find interesting. Get to know what the kiddo enjoys and what they want to learn about. Choosing educational media that contain characters, themes, or songs that a child is interested in can help support their learning

from screens. Additionally, choose media that includes things that the child is familiar with or enjoys. If a child loves caring for animals, offer a show about a veterinarian. Or even just look for content about kids their same age. Try to make the screen experience relate to their real life.

So, before using media, consider the child and your goal. Keep in mind the child's age, knowledge, and interests. Try to find shows or apps that match what they're into, in an appropriate way. When kids can relate to the media content, they are more likely to be interested and pay attention. And if you have a specific topic you want the child to learn about, select content that matches that goal. For example, if you want your child to work on learning the alphabet, try shows like *Sesame Street* that are designed to teach letters. Some educational shows and apps provide information about the learning goal right in the description, but other shows may require you to read an episode description. If you're not sure, you can always turn on an episode and fast-forward through it to preview what your child will see.

Once you have figured out what the show is about or what the lesson is, it can be helpful to give a "preview" to the child before they watch. This can be as simple as reading the episode description or game rules out loud. Research shows that explaining the storyline of a show can be helpful because it allows a child to focus more on the educational content. Basically, if you can help the child know what to expect, they will be better able to learn.

A third step to take before turning on a show or giving your child a tablet is setting clear rules. What can the child do on the screen? How many episodes can they watch? How long can they play? What will their next activity be after the screen? Explain when screen time will be over. For example, after 20 minutes, an episode, or when the dishes are done. When possible, give a heads-up a few minutes before the time is up. Timers and reminders can go a long way in helping to reduce screen time struggles. We love using visual timers that show children exactly how much time they have left so there are no surprises.

Another helpful thing to explain is what you (the caregiver) will be doing while the child uses media. Explain if you'll be watching the show or playing the game with them. If not, explain what you will be doing and where they can find you. For example, you can explain that you'll be working, cooking, or whatever it is that you need to take care of. Try to be fully present with the child, when possible, to create learning and bonding experiences through media. But when you can't, you can feel good about using media as a tool to help keep children safely occupied when you've chosen content that is safe and educational.

During Media Use

Now that you've set the child up for success, let's talk about ways to be involved during screen time. Please remember that you do not have to use every single one of these suggestions every time a child uses a screen. We are giving you research-based ideas for things you can do to boost learning and benefits. If you can choose even one of these ideas to try out, you can help children make extra learning gains from media.

When possible, the best way to be involved in your child's media use is ***joint media engagement***. This is where an adult watches, uses, and talks about media with a child. Using media together creates an opportunity to boost your child's screen-based learning.

During screen time, quick prompts can help children focus on the media experience. Try to direct the child's attention to important information on screen such as the main characters or lessons. For example, "That's Bluey! She and her sister Bingo. They live with their parents, Bandit and Chili, and they're all the main characters of the show. Let's see if they can teach us something new today." This will help them understand a lesson will be taught. This can also help them learn how to notice the important things on screen. Check out our scripts and tips documents about how to help your child be an active participant in their own learning from media.

While joint media engagement is the **ideal** situation for **learning from screens**, we know this NOT always realistic. **There is no guilt in letting children use educational media while you take care of some tasks or even just take a break.** You are a busy caregiver, and screen time can be a helpful tool, when used in healthy ways. We encourage you to use these tips to make it positive for the children in your care.

EBooks

Outside of your typical screen time activities including watching TV or playing a game, there are other ways to practice joint media engagement with children. One of our favorite ways to use media together is reading eBooks. Many families overlook and do not use eBooks in their homes. But there are so many benefits of reading books to children. eBooks create an opportunity to read books that you physically do not have in your home or childcare center. Children should be read to early and often - ideally every day, starting from birth. But only 59% of children are read to on a daily basis. If reading aloud is difficult, you can also find eBooks that will narrate the story aloud. Check your local library for options of how you can download children's eBooks.

Video Chat

Another option for using media together is video chat. Video chat, like FaceTime or Skype, has been found to support family relationship-building for children as young as infants. Video chat is appropriate and valuable for children of ALL ages. Kids can video chat as early as a few days old. Families often use video chat to help children bond and connect with far-away loved ones. Reasons like work, divorce, immigration, incarceration, and military service can separate kids from people who love them. But with video chat, your child can respond to and interact in real time with a person who may be far away. This helps give children a feeling of closeness to the person on the other end of the phone in a way that a regular phone call does not. Try calling a far-away grandparent or friend and teach the child to interact over video chat. It can be a lot of fun for everyone! Try having the child show the person they are video chatting objects, like a favorite book, and having the person talk about the object, like reading the book.

After Media Use

For so many of us, sitting down to use media with children is not realistic. That's okay! When you aren't there for the child's media use, you can use these tips to help. The main thing is helping the child build connections between the screen and real life.

If you don't know, try to find out the lesson or goal of the content they were using. You can go back and read the show, episode, or game description, to try and figure out what your child saw and learned. Then, you can use this information to help extend the lesson. In order to learn from the screen, kids need to think about the educational material in many different ways.

When you figure out the lesson, you can start by giving the child a summary. Re-explain what they saw. You can also expand the lesson taught on screen by helping them make new connections to the real world. This helps with "transfer" of the lesson, which is when the child takes what they learn on screen and uses it in real life. Help your child transfer the lesson by relating the content to their unique child's life. Connect the dots for them and explain the similarities. For example, if the lesson included an example of counting at the zoo, remind them of the time they went to a zoo and ask them to try and count the animals they saw.

If you don't know what the child did during screen time or can't figure out what the lesson was, you can still create a learning opportunity. Ask the child to tell you what they saw or did. See if they can tell you about what they learned. If nothing else, this can be a fun way to connect with the child and hear about what they noticed during their screen time.

Check out our **Boosting the Benefits of Screen Time Cheat Sheet** for a quick and easy summary of our tips, and don't forget to read the **Tools for Talking During Media PDF** for ideas about how to help focus children's minds during media use.

Key Takeaways

- Caregivers would ideally be involved in a child's screen time in some way, but it's okay if using media together isn't always possible
- Choose educational media options that match children's interests and your goals
- Being clear about screen time goals and rules, and giving a preview of what's coming before media use helps set children's screen time expectations and reduce power struggles
- Talk with children while using screens together. Asking questions and talking together can get you and the children in your care thinking, reflecting, predicting, and creating memories together.
- Supporting a child's media use with joint media engagement techniques before, during, and after screen use can boost the benefits of screen time

Discussion Questions and Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Parents:
- What does your children's screen time look like in your home? Are your children more likely to use screens as a way to occupy them while you're busy? Do you use screens together often?
- Do you ever watch shows or play apps along with your child? Do you have favorites that you enjoy watching or playing with them?
- How could you add more time for joint media engagement into your child's screen time? What would you like to do before, during, or after their media use?

Extension Activities for Parents:
- Think about one of your child's favorite shows, apps, or books. Create 3 questions that you could ask your child before, during, and after using one of their favorites. Keep in mind the discussion you hope to inspire and your learning goals.
- Plan a joint media engagement experience from start to finish. Pick a show, book, or app that you're interested in using with your child. Pick a day and time that you'd like to sit down with your child and use this media together. What would an ideal joint media experience look like for you? (For example, a movie night cuddled up with your kid and meaningful chats without phones or other distractions.)

Discussion Questions for Childcare Professionals:
- Do you use screens in group settings or individually with children? What challenges or opportunities could you foresee with practicing joint media engagement?
- Do you ever watch videos or play apps with children in your care? Do you have favorites that work well in a group environment?
- How could you use joint media engagement techniques with children in your care? What would work well before, during, or after media use?

Extension Activities for Childcare Professionals:
- Think about some of your favorite children's books, videos, or apps for children. Pick one and create 3 questions that you could ask children before, during, and after media use. Keep in mind the discussion you hope to inspire and your learning goals.
- Plan a joint media engagement experience from start to finish. Pick a show, book, or app that you're interested in using with the children. Pick a day and time that you'd like to use this media together. What would an ideal joint media experience look like for you? (For example, circle time with a viewing of an educational video and meaningful group discussion.)

C-R-O-W-D SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Let's say you and your child are watching an episode of Sesame Street together. During one of the segments, Elmo and his friends ran out of blocks while building and are looking for other items to finish their tower. Here are examples of each CROWD prompt that relates to this secnario:

COMPLETION: FILL IN THE BLANK
Oh, no. Elmo and his friends have a problem to solve. Hmm. "I wonder ____...?, what if, ____...?" ("I wonder, what if, let's try" is a commonly repeated phrase in this show.)

RECALL: REMEMBER SOMETHING THAT ALREADY HAPPENED
Which objects did they already try to build the tower with?

OPEN-ENDED: EXPLAIN WHAT ALREADY HAPPENED OR PREDICT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN NEXT
I wonder what they'll use instead of blocks to finish their tower? Do you have any ideas?

"WH-": WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY QUESTIONS
What is Elmo using instead of a block?

DISTANCING: RELATE SHOW TO REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES
Do you remember when we ran out of legos yesterday when we were making a tower?

P-E-E-R SAMPLE SCRIPTS

The PEER method helps kids think carefully when using media. This back-and-forth talk helps them connect better with what they see and hear, making it easier to learn. PEER scripts are especially helpful for more difficult content that's a little harder for your child. Here's an example of the PEER method using the same scenario from the CROWD script:

PROMPT: ASK THE CHILD A "C-R-O-W-D" QUESTION
Elmo is trying to make the tallest tower ever but he ran out of blocks! What other things did he use to build?

EVALUATE: CHECK IF WHAT THEY SAY IS CORRECT
That's right, nice work!
-OR- *Not quite, let's think.*

EXPAND: BUILD UPON WHAT THEY SAID
They used some boxes for their tower. They also tried bottles and containers. Those were sturdy just like blocks.

REPEAT: ECHO THE CONVERSATION
Elmo and Rosita ran out of blocks and needed to think of other things to use. That was a problem to solve! They solved the tower problem with boxes, containers, and bottles!

BOOSTING THE
BENEFITS OF SCREEN TIME

BEFORE

Consider your child & your goal

Give a preview

Set clear rules

DURING

Watch, use, and talk together

Help your child focus

Connect, reflect, & predict ideas

AFTER

Repeat the big ideas

Expand the learning

Talk about real life connections

those media moms

Video 5: Mastering the Media Environment at Home (Parent Video)

Overview:

- Introducing the Family Media Plan
- Setting up a Media Plan and Choosing Priorities

Video Script

I. Introducing the Family Media Plan

Creating a family media plan is one of our favorite ways to manage home media use. A family media plan is a process that helps you think about your goals, values, priorities, and rules around technology. Every family has different rules and habits for media use. Your family media plan will be totally unique to your own family's goals and needs.

The plan can regularly be changed or updated when things change or for special times like summer or holiday breaks. Make sure you have your copy of the **Creating Your Family Media Plan PDF** before watching the next video to follow along.

II. Setting up a Family Media Plan

A family media plan is a helpful way to include the whole family in setting media rules and goals. It is also a useful way to practice talking about media use with your kids BEFORE the media use happens. We'll take you step by step through creating your media plan.

First, consider the people that live in your home. The media plan is for all family members, including parents and children. You can go through the steps for each family member to create a plan that covers all areas of home media use.

Next, think about what matters most to you about your family's screen time. Do you want to focus on balancing time on and off-screen? Or maybe you want to create some screen-free areas of the house? Start by choosing the two priorities that matter most to you. You can always come back to the media plan and add more later. We'll give you a few examples of some priorities you could choose to focus on in your family media plan.

Balancing Screen Time with Off-Screen Play

Balancing screen time with off-screen play is an important part of healthy media use for kids. You already know that too much media use isn't good for kids. When planning screen time, it's important to think about your child's day. Make sure they have enough time for face-to-face interaction, indoor and outdoor playtime, and rest. Fill their day with more play than media. Avoid using media as a first option for calming your child down. Try things like a calm down corner or feelings chart to help your child handle big emotions rather than turning to media. For parents, balancing on and off-screen time can include erasing distracting apps from your phone and focusing on being present when you are with your children.

Setting Media Time Limits

Another thing you could choose to focus on is setting media time limits and turning devices off when they are not actively being used. It's important to watch your own balance of screen time with real life too, and you can try using your device's built-in screen time limits to help you stick to your goals. This also includes turning off the TV when nobody is watching. Having TV on in the background is one of the biggest ways that kids are exposed to media, and many times it is not kid-appropriate media. When the TV is on, kids play less and parents talk less to their kids. Uninterrupted play time and parent-child interactions are both extremely important. Turn off the TV when no one is actively watching it. This might be one of our easiest tips to try with the biggest impact on you and your child!

It is a parent's job to create, hold, and explain the rule, but this does not mean that your child will be happy about it. We can give you tips to hopefully reduce the screen time struggles, but no matter what ending screen time can be hard for little ones. In the same way that children can get upset when it's time to leave the park, media time is fun, and it's hard to switch away from a fun activity. Sometimes it can feel easier to just press play on another episode when your child cries that screen time is over, but we'll give you some helpful ideas and scripts for sticking to your rules in our **Holding Tech Boundaries PDF.** One of our favorite ideas is to have "off-ramp" activities or special playtime that helps your child switch from media to the real world.

Talking About Media With Your Kids

If you choose to focus on talking with your kids about media more, the first step is to let go of any uncomfortable feelings you have around media use. When parents feel guilty about their child's screen time, they talk about media less. But it's a huge help to your kids if you have regular conversations about their screen time. When you have the confidence to use screens with purpose, media conversations can be valuable to your family. It is very important that your child feels comfortable discussing media with you so they let you know if they see something shocking, upsetting, or scary so that you can help them feel better (check out the **What's Scary PDF** for more info).

You can also talk about how media makes your child feel in general. How does their body feel when they finish watching an episode or playing a game? What feelings do they have when screen time starts and ends? These conversions are important for helping your child build media awareness. They also help your child gain a greater sense of self-awareness around the

things they do affect how they feel. It can be a good habit for yourself as well to think about how you feel during your own screen use.

Part of talking to your kids about media is helping them understand your rules. Setting and holding boundaries, or rules, around technology can be hard. But it's much easier to enforce the rules when plan ahead. Rules can include things like when and how much time your children are allowed to use technology and doing your best to keep devices turned off and out of sight when it is not time to use them.

Creating Screen-Free Times and Areas

If you choose to focus on creating screen-free times and areas for your family, first think about where technology is in your home. Do you have a TV in the living room? Where do you keep the remote? Do you have an area where everyone plugs in their devices to charge? Some important screen-free times and places to think about are: no devices in the kitchen or at mealtime, no devices in the bedroom, not allowing screen use at night, and only using media in the car for special times like long road trips (this means parents too, no texting and driving!!).

It can also be a good idea to have "screen-OK" days in the week. For example, it's okay to watch TV on Monday through Friday after school and on Saturday morning. Try to set one screen-free day each week where you prioritize a family activity instead. Like on Sundays, we turn off the screens and play a game together. Other things to think about are not using screens first thing in the morning or as the last thing at night, only using one screen at a time, and using the "do not disturb" features on phones to have fewer notifications.

Using High-Quality Shows and Aps

If you choose to focus on using high-quality shows and apps, we recommend utilizing our **Video and App Checklists** to help you think about the types of media you are okay with your child using. You can offer them creative, friendly, positive, and educational media options. Try to review new media before your child sees it, especially if it is an app game that may have multiple features and levels.

Using Media Together

And finally, if you choose to focus on using media together, there are a few ways you can make it fun for the whole family. You could have a family movie night that is both a time to be together and an opportunity to practice talking about media. Some of my favorite memories growing up are when we would go to Blockbuster Video on a Friday night, pick out a family movie, and enjoy watching it together.. Obviously that's not how movie nights work anymore, but the point is that you can still use media as a way to create special memories with your family. Another way to do this is to choose a time each day where you and your child will watch a video or play a game together and talk about what you saw and learned.

When you've finished thinking about what you want to focus on, you can flip to the **Daily Scheduling Worksheet.** We also used this in an earlier lesson but see if your schedules have

changed at all with what you know now. Think of this like a time budget. How much time do you plan to offer media use on the weekdays and weekends? When will you schedule play time for your child to make sure they spend more time on activities that are important to development? , Do you have a plan of what types of media you would like your child to use at set times of the day or week? This is a blank slate for you to design how to make media work for your family. After you finish the family media plan, share it with the other parents in the group to see how you each create a unique media experience for your kids.

Key Takeaways

- A Family Media Plan is a helpful tool for including all family members in creating and sticking to your media rules and limits in the house
- You can choose to focus on two of these priorities in your media plan:
    - Balancing screen time with off-screen play
    - Setting media time limits and turning off devices when not in use
    - Having regular conversations with kids about screen time and what they see
    - Creating screen-free times and areas
    - Choosing high-quality media options
    - Using media together as a family

Discussion Questions & Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Parents

- What challenges do you encounter with screen use in your home? How could a media plan help with these challenges?
- Which priorities did you choose to focus on for your family?
- How do you hope to use these priorities to make screen time healthy for the whole family?

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FAMILY
MEDIA
PLAN

How to Use This Plan

Making the most of screen time starts with having a plan. It's important to set *goal* and *limits* around your family's media use. Start by thinking about what you want to focus on in screen time, and how screens fit into the daily routine for your family.

Creating this media plan together is a great way to include the whole family in a conversation about *healthy tech habits*. This is also a chance to practice involving each of your kids in individual conversations about their own media use.

First, choose two or three goals to focus on. Then check out the pages about those goals and use the ideas to start a family conversation about how you will design your own media plan.

Goals Checklist

☐ Balancing on- and off-screen activities

☐ Creating screen-free times and areas

☐ Setting media time limits

☐ Choosing high-quality content

☐ Having open communication about media

☐ Using media together as a family

BALANCING ON- AND OFF-SCREEN ACTIVITIES

- **Plan the day**

Start with sleep, meal time, and playtime, then figure out how media fits into the remaining parts of the day. Use the *Daily Scheduling Worksheet* to help see how each family member will find balance.

- **Try not to use media as a first option**

When you need to calm your child, try things like a calm down corner or feelings chart to help your child work through big emotions rather than quieting them with media.

- **Delete distractions**

Remove apps from your phone that take up too much of your attention to help you to focus more on your kids when you are spending time with them.

Our family will create a balance of on- and off-screen activities by:

SETTING MEDIA TIME LIMITS

• **Turn off or put away devices when they are not in use**
This especially means the TV and remote, but is also important for tablets and phones. Out of sight, out of mind can help support healthy media habits.

• **Use a visual timer**
Teach your child about healthy screen time by using tools like a visual timer so they can see when screen time will end. Practice setting the timer when you turn on the screen and check in to let them know how much time is left.

• **Set clear limits around screen time**
Tell your child what they can do on the screen for how long, and what they can do after their screen time is over. This can help to set expectations and reduce tantrums when it's time to move on from the screen.

• **Try out *"TV Tokens"* or *"Game Tokens"***
Your child has a set number of "tokens" each day or week, that they can "trade in or spend" for a certain number of episodes or amount of app time. Being able to choose when they use their tokens gives your child a sense of control and still allows you to keep your limits. It works best for older preschoolers. There's a token template at the end of this document!

Our family will set media time limits by:

HAVING OPEN COMMUNICATION ABOUT MEDIA

- **Talk regularly about media**

Make a habit of talking to your child about what they think and how they feel about their screen time, especially if you are not with them for screen time.

- **Act quickly if your child sees something scary or violent**

Talking to them about what they saw will help them be better able to deal with it. You can use our scripts if you want some help with having these conversations in a way that your kids can understand and learn from.

- **Explain what you are doing on devices when kids are present**

Kids may not understand how we use our devices for day-to-day tasks. Help them understand by explaining how you use tech as a tool. For example, "I'm writing an email to Nana to tell her about your soccer game" or "I'm using my phone to write a grocery list before we go to the store together".

- **Teach your child to recognize ads**

Many apps, shows, and online videos for kids unfortunately include advertising. Explain to kids what an ad is and how it is designed to try to make them to want the thing it is selling.

Our family will practice open communication about media by:

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CREATING SCREEN-FREE TIMES AND ZONES

- **No screens during meal times**
Screens at the table can lead to overeating and decrease family conversation. Try turning off all media in the house and introducing a "phone box" in the kitchen so everyone can see that the tech has been put away.

- **No screens in the bedroom**
Separate media from sleep. If a family member relies on video to calm down or sleep, try switching to podcasts, audiobooks, or calming music.

- **Avoid screen time one hour before bed**
Research shows that media use at night can lead to worse sleep, less sleep, and problems with paying attention and behaving the next day.

- **No screens in the car**
Keep screens out of the car (when possible). This includes not texting and driving for parents! Talk with kids about what they see outside, sing songs, or play a game like "I Spy". It's ok for kids to be a little bored sometimes also.

- **Have a screen-free day each week or month**
Make it fun for the whole family! You can take a nature walk, have a picnic, do a puzzle or craft, or just spend time relaxing together without devices.

Our family will create screen-free times and zones by:

CHOOSING HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

- **Use our media checklists as guides**
Review the *High-Quality Video Checklist* and *High-Quality App Checklist* to help you choose the best shows and apps for your unique child.

- **Try focusing on a topic or learning goal**
Choose a topic like reading or math that you want to focus on for your child, and look for shows and games that match this. Keep in mind that a show or game does not have to be labeled as "educational" to promote learning. Creativity, curiosity, wondering, and celebrating diversity are great lessons for young children to see in media.

- **Review new shows, movies, and apps**
Take a look before letting your child see or use them. This is extra important for games with many levels or mini-games included.

- **Avoid any scary, violent, mean, or adult-directed media for your child.**
Remember, just because you think something is boring or do not find it scary, this does not mean that it will not affect your child.

Our family will prioritize choosing high-quality content by:

USING MEDIA TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

- **Schedule time to use media together**

In the same way that you sit down and read a book to your child, use media together with them by watching or playing with them and discussing what is going on. Choose a regular time when you plan to share media together with your child, even if it is just watching a short video.

- **Make media time a family tradition**

Try having a monthly movie or game night where everyone to uses media together. Kids can look forward to this as a fun family activity, and you can get into the habit of being actively involved in their media experiences.

- **Create media together**

Kids love to take photos and videos of their world. Give your child the chance to practice media skills by creating a short video together on your phone. You can also use this as a chance to help them connect what they see on screen and their real life to help them learn from media more easily.

Our family will prioritize using media together by:

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE FOR:

Time	
6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

DAILY TIME GOALS

SLEEP	11 to 14 hours (ages 1-2), 10-13 hours (ages 3-5)
OUTSIDE PLAY	At least 30 minutes per day, ideally spending more time outside than on screens each day
SCREEN TIME	Less than one hour daily of high-quality educational content

WEEKEND SCHEDULE FOR:

Time	
6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

DAILY TIME GOALS

SLEEP	11 to 14 hours (ages 1-2), 10-13 hours (ages 3-5)
OUTSIDE PLAY	At least 30 minutes per day, ideally spending more time outside than on screens each day
SCREEN TIME	Less than one hour daily of high-quality educational content

MEDIA MENU EXAMPLE

Use the grid on the next page to create a visual "media menu" for your child. Copy images of the shows and/or apps you have chosen for them to use and paste them into the squares.
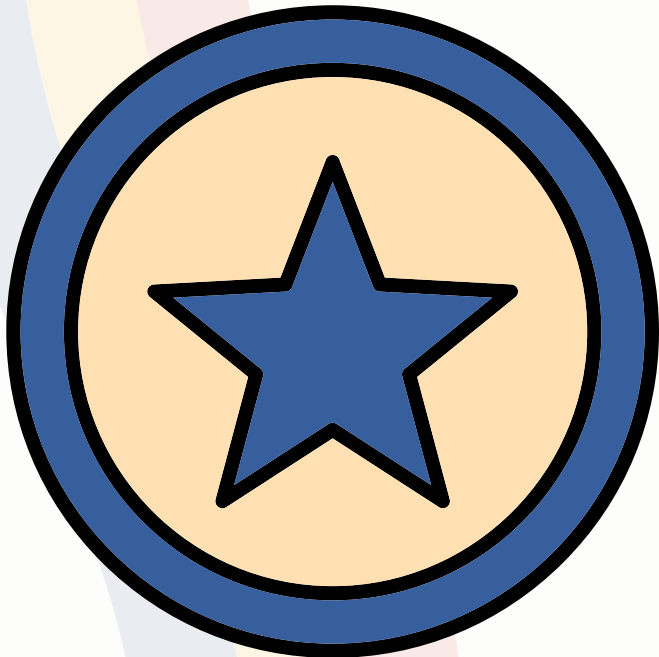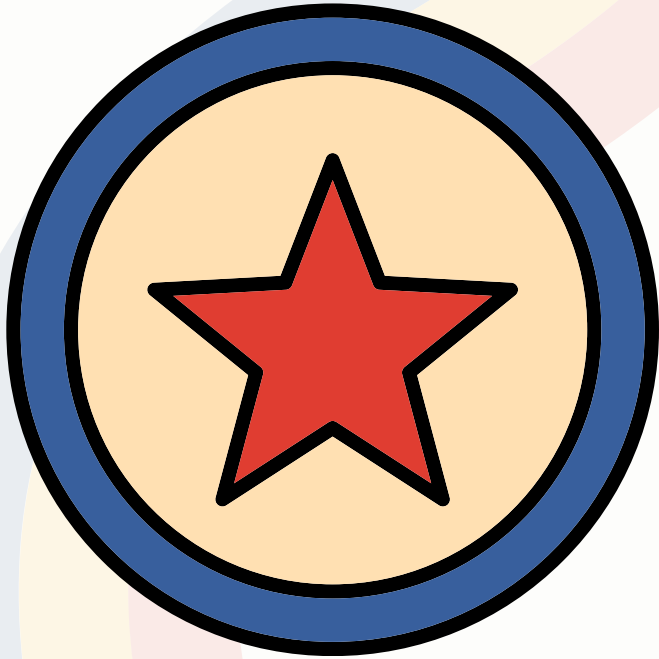
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MEDIA MENU TEMPLATE

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MEDIA TOKEN TEMPLATE

Give your child tokens each day or week to represent your chosen amount of media time. For example, they start the day with two tokens and can trade in one token for one episode of a show.
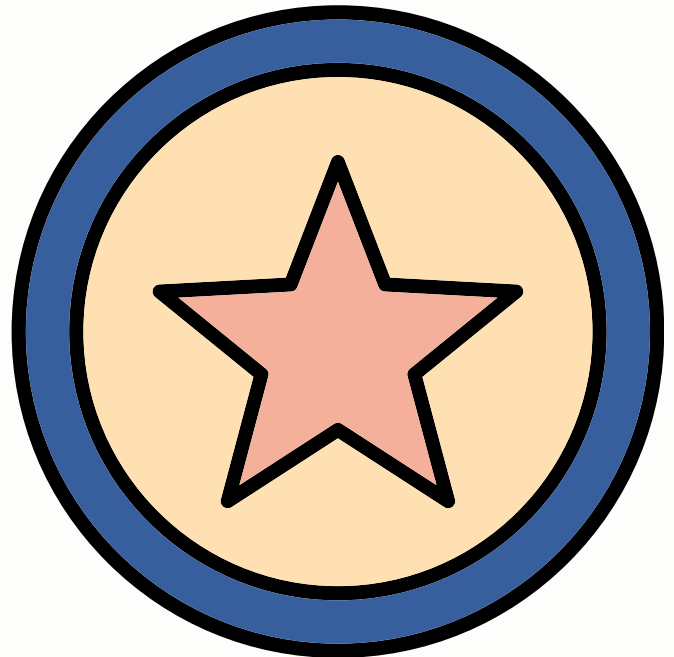
HOLDING TECH BOUNDARIES

IT'S OUR JOB TO HOLD BOUNDARIES.

IT'S OKAY FOR KIDS TO HAVE FEELINGS ABOUT IT.

It is hard to handle the meltdowns when the TV turns off. It's *so easy* to just let the next episode play. Why not prevent a tantrum with the press of a button, right?

HOLDING FIRM WITH TECH BOUNDARIES IS IMPORTANT FOR SETTING HEALTHY MEDIA HABITS FOR YOUNG KIDS.

Holding tech boundaries provides kids with the necessary rules for balancing the benefits of screen time with the need for real-world experiences, spending time in person, and play.

Tech boundaries help make sure that technology serves as a tool for learning and entertainment, rather than a problem.

HOLDING TECH BOUNDARIES

THE TOUGHEST TECH BOUNDARIES

There are two boundaries that caregivers find extra tough to stick to with young children:

- TURNING DEVICES OFF
- CHOOSING WHAT KIDS CAN WATCH

Having a script to rely on can help you more easily hold these boundaries. You can use our sample scripts and change them as needed!

REMEMBER

YOUNG KIDS CAN HAVE A HARD TIME WITH CHANGING ACTIVITIES AND BEING TOLD "NO". THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL! YOUNG KIDS ARE STILL WORKING HARD ON SELF-CONTROL AND MANAGING STRONG FEELINGS.

BEING CONSISTENT IS KEY!
WHEN YOU HOLD TECH BOUNDARIES WITH YOUR CHILD *MOST OF THE TIME*, IT CAN REDUCE THE STRUGGLES

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HOLDING
TECH BOUNDARIES

TURNING DEVICES OFF

Okay, the episode is over! We're all done watching TV today. Now it's time to go to the store.

I hear you. You are upset that TV time is over.

I understand it's really fun to watch shows and you want to watch more. We're going to do something else fun now.

It looks like you're feeling angry. It's okay to be angry about it. We're going to turn off the TV now and get ready for the store. Do you want to put your shoes on by yourself or should I help?

CHOOSING CONTENT

It's time to pick out your TV show for today! You can choose between _____ show or _____ show.

I hear you. You want to watch a movie. We don't have time for a movie right now. We can watch one of these two shows.

I understand, that movie is your favorite and you love it.

You're disappointed you can't watch your movie. That's okay. You can pick between these two shows or we can do something else, like read a book.

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Video 5: Mastering the Childcare Media Environment (Childcare Provider Video)

Overview:
- Introducing the Media Plan
- Setting up a Media Plan and Choosing Priorities
  - Finding the Right Balance for Screen Time
  - Setting Media Time Limits
  - Talking about Media with Children and their Families
  - Creating Screen-Free Times and Areas
  - Using High-Quality Shows and Apps
  - Using Media Together

Video Script

Introducing the Media Plan

Creating a media plan is an effective way to manage media use in your early childhood environment. A media plan helps you think about your goals, values, priorities, and rules around technology. Caregivers have different approaches, rules, and habits for media use. Your media plan will be unique to your own goals and needs.

The plan can be regularly updated when things change or for special times like seasonal breaks or special projects. Make sure you have your copy of the **Creating Your Caregiver Media Plan PDF** to follow along.

Setting up a Media Plan

A media plan is a helpful way to involve all caregivers in setting media rules and goals. It also provides a structured way to practice discussing media use with children before media use happens. We'll guide you step-by-step through creating your media plan.

First, consider the people in your care. The media plan should include guidelines for all caregivers and students. You can go through the steps for different classrooms or age groups to create a plan that covers all of the children at your establishment and areas of media use.

Next, think about what matters most to you regarding screen time when children are with you. Do you want to focus on your own screen time? Do you have goals for children's screen use?

Start by choosing the two priorities that matter most to you. You can always revisit the media plan and add more later. We'll give you a few examples of some priorities you could focus on in your classroom media plan.

Finding the Right Balance for Screen Time

Reflect upon the amount of screen time that children in your care experience. Are they using screens for learning or entertainment? Is it regular, scheduled, for special occasions, or never? Everyone's situation will be different. We'd like to reiterate that excessive media use isn't beneficial for kids. When planning a child's day, we want to make sure that children have enough time for the things that we know are beneficial, like face-to-face interactions, indoor and outdoor play, meal and snack times, and rest. Basically, the goal is to fill their day with much more play than media. Additionally for caregivers, balancing screen time with off-screen activities can include minimizing your personal screen use and focusing on being present with children in your care.

Setting Media Time Limits

Another focus area could be setting media time limits and ensuring devices are turned off when not in use. It's essential to maintain a balance between screen time and real life. Use your device's built-in screen time limits to help you stick to your goals. This includes turning off the TV or other devices when not actively used. Background TV is a major source of media exposure for children, often with content not suitable for them. When the TV is on, kids play less, and caregivers interact less with them. Opportunities for uninterrupted playtime and caregiver-child interactions are really important. If you have a TV, turning it off when no one is actively watching it is an easy tip that will have a significant impact on you and the children.

It's the caregiver's role to create, hold, and explain rules surrounding media, but this doesn't mean the children will always be happy about it. We can offer tips to reduce screen time struggles, but ending screen time can be hard for little ones. Just like how leaving the playground is hard for kids, transitioning away from screen time can also be challenging. It might be tempting to allow more screen time when children are upset, but we'll provide helpful ideas and scripts for sticking to your rules in our **Holding Tech Boundaries PDF.** One idea is to have "off-ramp" activities or special playtime that helps children transition from media to real-life activities.

Talking About Media With Children and their Families

If you choose to focus on discussing media use with children in your care and other adults in their lives, start by letting go of any discomfort around media use. When parents and caregivers feel guilty about screen time, they often don't want to discuss it. However, having regular

conversations about screen time is beneficial for children and their families. Confidently using screens with purpose can make media conversations easier and more valuable. It's crucial that children and their families feel comfortable discussing media with you so they can discuss screen time with you. Families and parents especially may want to talk to you about these topics since they value you and your expertise in caregiving.

When you're using your own devices, you can tell children what you're up to. Maybe you're logging daily activities, chatting with parents, looking something up, etc. It's important that you explain this to children to let them know you're using your devices with purpose, as tools and for learning.

You can also discuss how media makes children feel. How does their body feel after watching a video or playing a game? What emotions do they experience when screen time starts and ends? These conversations help children build media awareness and self-awareness about how their activities affect their feelings. This practice can also benefit you as a caregiver. How do you feel when using devices while you have children in your care?

Part of discussing media with your students is helping them understand the rules. Setting and holding boundaries around technology can be challenging, but it's easier with a plan. Rules can include when and how much time children are allowed to use technology and ensuring devices are turned off and out of sight when not in use.

Creating Screen-Free Times and Areas

If you choose to focus on creating screen-free times and areas in your caregiving environment, first consider where technology is located. Do you have a TV in the classroom or environment you're in? Where is the remote? Is there a designated area for devices? Do you use a phone or devices during the day? When and where? Some important screen-free times and places to consider are: no devices during meal times, no devices in nap and sleep areas, limiting screen use at certain times of the day, and only using media for specific educational purposes. If you need to use devices for contacting parents, logging daily activities, etc., think about when and where would be best for that.

It can also be beneficial to have "screen-OK" days during the week. For example, it's okay to use screens for certain activities after structured learning sessions. If you use screens with children in your care, perhaps set one screen-free day each week to prioritize interactive and hands-on activities. Consider avoiding screens first thing in the morning or as the last activity of the day, using one screen at a time, and utilizing the "do not disturb" features on devices to minimize interruptions.

Using High-Quality Shows and Apps

If you choose to focus on using high-quality shows and apps, utilize our **Video and App Checklists** to evaluate the media content for children. Offer creative, friendly, positive, and educational media options. Review new media before introducing it to the children, especially apps with multiple features and levels.

Using Media Together

Finally, if you choose to focus on using media together, there are ways to make it a fun and educational experience for all children involved. You could have a movie day that doubles as a time for group interaction and a chance to discuss media content. Or a special app activity for small group play. Some wonderful memories can come from shared media experiences. Another approach is to schedule a time each day where you and the students watch a video or play an educational game together, followed by a discussion about what they saw and learned. It's important for children to have opportunities to use media with a caregiver who can supervise and guide the experience to model healthy, positive, educational use.

After you've decided what to focus on, refer to the **Daily Scheduling Worksheet**. This worksheet helps you plan media use during children's day, scheduling time for activities that are important for development. Design a media plan that works for your classroom and share it with fellow caregivers to see how each of you creates a unique media experience for children in your care.

Key Takeaways
- A Media Plan is a valuable tool for involving all caregivers in setting and adhering to media rules and limits.
- You can choose to focus on two of these priorities in your media plan:
    - Balancing screen time with off-screen activities
    - Setting media time limits and turning off devices when not in use
    - Having regular conversations with children about screen time and content
    - Creating screen-free times and areas
    - Choosing high-quality media options
    - Using media together

Discussion Questions & Extension Activities

Discussion Questions for Childcare Providers:
- What challenges do you encounter with child, parent, or even your own screen use? How could a media plan help with these challenges?
- Which priorities did you choose to focus on for your media plan?
- How do you hope to use these priorities to make screen time healthy and beneficial for children in your care?

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CAREGIVER MEDIA PLAN

Priorities Checklist

☐ Balancing on- and off-screen activities

☐ Creating screen-free times and zones

☐ Setting media time limits

☐ Choosing high-quality content

☐ Having open communication about media

☐ Using media together

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SETTING MEDIA TIME LIMITS

- **Turn off or put away devices when they are not in use**
This especially means the TV and remote, but is also important for tablets and phones. Out of sight, out of mind can help support healthy media habits.

- **Use a visual timer**
Teach children about healthy screen time by using tools like a visual timer so they can see when screen time will end. Practice setting the timer when you turn on the screen and check in to let them know how much time is left.

- **Set clear boundaries around screen time**
Tell children what they can do on the screen for how long, and what they can do after their screen time is over. This can help to set expectations and reduce tantrums when it's time to move on from the screen.

- **Try out *"TV Tokens"* or *"Game Tokens"***
Children have a set number each day or week, and can "trade them in" for a certain number of episodes or amount of app time. This approach to screen time gives children a sense of control within your limits. It works best for older preschoolers. There's a token template at the end of this document!

We will set media time limits by:

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HAVING OPEN COMMUNICATION ABOUT MEDIA

- **Regularly talk about media**

Make a habit of talking to children about what they think and how they feel about their screen time, especially if you were not able to be present.

- **Act quickly if children see something scary or violent**

Talking to them about what they saw will help them process. You can use our scripts if you want some help with how to handle these conversations in a way that kids can understand and learn from.

- **Explain what you are doing on devices when kids are present**

Kids may not understand how we use our devices for day-to-day tasks. Help them understand by explaining how you use tech as a tool. For example, "I'm writing an email to your mom to tell her about your lost tooth" or "I'm using my phone to write a list of books before we go on a trip to the library".

- **Teach children to recognize ads**

Many apps, shows, and online videos for kids unfortunately include advertising. Help children become mindful consumers by explaining what an ad is and how it convinces them to want a product.

We will practice open communication about media by:

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CREATING SCREEN-FREE TIMES AND ZONES

- **No screens during meal times**

Screens at the table can lead to overeating and decrease connection with children. Try turning off all media in and making sure all tech is put away during snack and meal times.

- **No screens in nap areas**

Separate media from sleep. If children on video to calm down or sleep, try switching to podcasts, audiobooks, or calming music.

- **Have a screen-free day each week or month**

If children in your care use screens daily, make a fun switch for everyone! You can try out new activities like taking a nature walk, having a picnic, doing a new puzzle or craft, or just spending time relaxing together without devices.

We will create screen-free times and zones by:

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CHOOSING HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

- **Use our media checklists as guides**
Review the *High-Quality Video Checklist* and **High-Quality App Checklist** to help you choose the best shows and apps for children in your care.

- **Try focusing on a topic or learning goal**
Choose a topic like reading or math that you want to focus on for children, and look for shows and games that match this. Keep in mind that a show or game does not have to be labeled as "educational" to promote learning. Creativity, curiosity, inquiry, and celebrating diversity are great lessons for young children to see in media.

- **Review new shows, movies, and apps**
Take a look before letting children see or use them. This is extra important for interactive games with many levels or mini-games included.

- **Avoid any scary, violent, mean, or adult-directed media for children**
Remember, just because you think something is boring or do not find it scary, this does not mean that it will not affect young children.

We will prioritize choosing high-quality content by:

![those media moms]

USING MEDIA TOGETHER

- **Schedule time to use media together**

In the same way that you sit down and read books to children, co-use media with them by watching or playing together and discussing what is going on. Choose a regular time when you plan to co-use media together with children, even if it is just watching a short video.

- **Make media time a special treat or tradition**

Try having a monthly movie or game time for everyone to use media together as a shared experience. Kids can look forward to this as a fun bonding opportunity, and you can get into the habit of being actively involved in their media experiences.

- **Create media together**

Kids love to take photos and videos of their world. An easy way to do this is to take pictures together of children's activities, art, and play. You can talk about them together and share with parents or other caregivers. This gives children the opportunity to see screen time as an opportunity to bond, and build connections between what they see on screen and their real life

We will prioritize using media together by:

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

those media moms

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE FOR:

6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	

DAILY TIME GOALS

SLEEP	11 to 14 hours (ages 1-2), 10-13 hours (ages 3-5)
OUTSIDE PLAY	At least 30 minutes per day, ideally spending more time outside than on screens each day
SCREEN TIME	Less than one hour daily of high-quality educational content

those media moms

WEEKEND SCHEDULE FOR:

Time	
6 AM	
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
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HOLDING
TECH BOUNDARIES

IT'S OUR JOB TO HOLD BOUNDARIES.

IT'S OKAY FOR KIDS TO HAVE FEELINGS ABOUT IT.

It is hard to handle the meltdowns when the TV turns off. It's *so easy* to just let the next episode play. Why not prevent a tantrum with the press of a button, right?

HOLDING FIRM WITH TECH BOUNDARIES IS IMPORTANT FOR SETTING HEALTHY MEDIA HABITS FOR YOUNG KIDS.

Holding tech boundaries provides kids with the necessary rules for balancing the benefits of screen time with the need for real-world experiences, face-to-face interactions, and play.

Tech boundaries help make sure that technology serves as a tool for learning and entertainment, rather than a pain point.

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HOLDING TECH BOUNDARIES

SAMPLE SCRIPTS

TURNING DEVICES OFF

Okay, the episode is over! We're all done watching TV today. Now it's time to go to the store.

I hear you, you're upset that TV time is over.

I understand it's really fun to watch shows and you want to watch more. We're going to do something else fun now.

It looks like you're feeling angry. It's okay to be angry about it. We're going to turn off the TV now and get ready for the store. Do you want to put your shoes on by yourself or should I help?

CHOOSING CONTENT

It's time to pick out your TV show for today! You can choose between _____ show or _____ show.

I hear you, you want to watch a movie. We don't have time for a movie right now. We can watch one of these two shows.

I understand, that movie is your favorite and you love it.

You're disappointed you can't watch your movie. That's okay. You can pick between these two shows or we can do something else, like read a book.

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