

# Healthy Kids in a Digital World

Remember  
to unplug!

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## Unplug to **CONNECT**

### Children need nurturing relationships!

Kids who spend less time with screens spend more time with their families.

### Caring adults help children:

- Feel comfortable with themselves
- Have successful friendships
- Love learning

### HEALTHY KID TIPS

Screen-free connections don't have to take a lot of time; they can easily happen every day:

- Chat on the way home from child care.
- Cook meals together. Kids love stirring and measuring.
- Share songs and stories during bath time.

*No app or program is as interactive as a teacher, parent, or playmate.*

### Children benefit from connecting with nature, too

Watch clouds • Splash through puddles • Collect leaves

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## Unplug to **LEARN**

### How do preschoolers learn best?

- Exploring with all their senses
- Through hands-on, free play
- Having lots of conversations
- When grown-ups read to them

### Children who spend less time with screens:

- Do better in school
- Have more time for creative play and interacting with caring adults, two activities essential to learning

### HEALTHY KID TIP

Choose books without added noises and moving pictures—let kids imagine their own. Digital features can interfere with story understanding, which is an important step toward literacy.

*Smart phones, tablets, e-books, TV, apps, digital games, videos...  
Screen-free time is more important than ever!*



Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

[commercialfreechildhood.org](http://commercialfreechildhood.org)

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## Unplug for **HEALTH**

### Children who spend less time with screens:

- Fall asleep faster
- Sleep longer
- Eat healthier
- Get more exercise

### Be a positive role model

Kids learn screen-time habits from parents and caregivers.

### HEALTHY KID TIP

- Encourage outdoor, free play as often as possible—it helps develop strong, healthy bodies.
- Make bedtime routines screen-free—kids who use screens at night have more sleep problems.
- Keep screens out of bedrooms.
- Enjoy screen-free, family meals—they encourage healthy eating.

*Given the chance, young children love to run, skip, jump, dance, and climb.*

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## Unplug and **PLAY**

Children naturally create their own fun. But if they ever need help getting started, here are a few suggestions:

### Alone or with a friend

- Draw with sidewalk chalk
- Dig in mud
- Make sheet tents for indoor camping
- Play dress-up
- Build with cardboard boxes

### During chores

- Play “I Spy” at the grocery store
- Make sorting laundry a game
- Sing songs while cleaning up

### Traveling and eating out

- Find cars in different colors
- Count stops until your station
- Draw on paper napkins and placemats

### CELEBRATE SCREEN-FREE WEEK

[screenfree.org](http://screenfree.org)

### FOR MORE IDEAS

[screenfree.org/screen-free-activities](http://screenfree.org/screen-free-activities)

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## Did You **KNOW?**

- There’s no evidence to support the popular view that children must start using screen technologies early on to succeed in a digital world.
- How children spend their time is important—lifelong habits and behaviors are formed in childhood.
- TV, digital games, and the internet can be habit-forming.
- Content matters: Even a little exposure to fast-paced, violent, sexualized, or commercialized games and programs can be harmful.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends avoiding screens for children under 2 and no more than 1 to 2 hours of screen time a day for older kids.