



## Remember MEDIA

Message • Environment • Developmental Stage • Information • Amount

### Message Matters

All media are educational—it's what they teach that varies. Therefore, choose media that teach lessons you'd like your kids to learn. Look for screen media that are designed to teach preschoolers prosocial and school-readiness skills. See for yourself what kinds of messages they send, such as encouraging kids to help people or to explore the natural world.

### Environment Matters

Place all screens in non-eating family areas. Screen-free family mealtimes are important for preschoolers as it allows them to focus on eating and gives your family a chance to reconnect and share stories from the day. Preschoolers typically sleep 11-13 hours each night, and keeping screens out of bedrooms usually means more and better sleep. Keeping TVs, computers, and video game consoles in public spaces allows you to be present for all screen media use. That means that you can select content and, when it's time, help them move on to a different activity.

### Developmental Stage Matters

Young children take in everything they see, but they understand it differently than you do. For example, preschoolers can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality, so something that's clearly make-believe to you (like a character transforming from a human to an animal) might be confusing or terrifying to them. Whenever preschoolers are in the audience, choose media designed for their age group.

### Information Matters

Make informed decisions about media by using CMCH resources, talking to other parents, and researching products before using them.

### Amount Matters

Preschoolers need enough time for free play, family meals, play with friends, and sleep, so prioritize screentime after those tasks. When they do use screen media, align use with your child's attention span. Your child is likely to lose interest after 15-20 minutes. When this happens, shut the media off and move to another activity.

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