

“ TRANSCRIPT ”

The amount of time that little kids spend with small screens has skyrocketed in the last five years. As an education reporter and a mom, I wanted to know: How much screen time is too much? I talked to dozens of experts, and surveyed over 500 families, and came up with three simple rules. (And yes, they're inspired by food writer Michael Pollan.) Enjoy screens, not too much, mostly together.

Rule No. 1: Enjoy screens.

Whether you want your kid to be great at the arts, design, business, or science, they'll need tech skills too. That means using devices as tools for creation, discovery and connection. Children learn by playing. Why not invite them to go beyond passive viewing by sending emojis to Grandma, or trying out a coding language like Scratch Jr.

Rule No. 2: Not too much.

Too much screen time contributes to poor sleep, obesity and the risk of negative mental, social and emotional outcomes. Tips for cutting back include: Shut down screens well before bedtime—the blue light keeps people awake. Don't swipe while you eat. That includes you, too, parents. Mindless eating with a side dish of media can drive up the risk of obesity, and it crowds out family time. Don't let screens trap your kid indoors. They need to get outside and play, every day.

Rule No. 3: Mostly together.

It can be easy to treat a screen as a babysitter, but kids often need help understanding what they see. Talk with your kids about what they're watching or doing online, ask them to show you the latest app or game, or put on a music video and dance together. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to screen time, but these three little rules should help your kids, and you, maintain a healthy balance.

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