

BITE-SIZED TIPS FROM NIEC'S

NAPTIME WEBINAR

Babies and Screen Time



How do babies learn?

Experience-dependent neuroplasticity: when babies' neural connections are strengthened through meaningful interactions with caregivers and the environment.

A baby's brain thrives by **connecting**:



through relationships with caregivers



through play and exploration

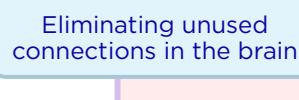


through live interactions



through active movement

Connections that are used frequently become stronger and more permanent, while those that are not used are "**pruned**" away.



SYNAPTIC PRUNING
Eliminating unused connections in the brain

Extensive screen use for infants can lead to:

- Deficits in executive functions
- Language and communication delays
- Inability to form social and emotional connections
- Struggles with emotional regulation
- Physical health issues



MYTH #1

If there is a TV running in the background and an infant is engaged in play, it is not considered screen time.

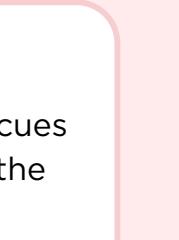
ACTIVE SCREEN TIME



Engaging activities such as educational games, creative apps, video calls and interactive learning.

VS

PASSIVE SCREEN TIME



One-directional consumption that requires low cognitive engagement and offers little meaningful interaction.

But when it comes to infants...

- Background TV can distract an infant from **focusing** and receiving social cues
- Infants can face **sensory overload**, which can lead to lack of attention to the actual play.
- Babies who are exposed to higher screen time had the tendency to have **lower language and literacy skills** later in life.



"ABC+D" STRATEGY

A

Audio: select soothing music

B

Be present: engage in play with infants

C

Create screen-free zones

D

Ditch the TV!

MYTH #2

Using screen time is an acceptable way to calm an infant.

Screens can **distract** infants from meltdowns, but do not aid in the development of **behaviour regulation** and **coping skills**.

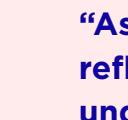
Bright lights and catchy tunes entertain, but can also lead to screen time tantrums



GUIDELINES FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH)

- **No screen time** for infants below 18 months except for interactive chatting
- **Do not leave screens running in the background** when child is engaged in other activities.
- 18 months to 6 years: **less than 1 hour** outside school

[Click here for more details.](#)



"PRIME" STRATEGY

- P Predictable routines
- R Responding to infant's cues
- I Interactions that are meaningful and authentic
- M Modelling healthy habits
- E Emotional coaching

Share these tips with parents!



"As early educators who are thoughtful planners and reflective practitioners, we want to be intentional in understanding what these tools (technology and screens) specifically mean for infants."



TIPS SHARED BY

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