



“One of the most harmful consequences of the amount of time kids now spend on screens is a **decrease in interactive play** in children’s lives. Interactive play is an essential pathway toward social maturity in young children. Every moment of **interactive play with an admired adult** is a moment of shared interest and enjoyment, and therefore **beneficial in a child’s emotional life**. It is also a **minilesson** in coping with frustration and disappointment, in **making accommodations and getting along with others** and in learning self-restraint.” Kenneth Barish Ph.D

Social and emotional skills are not learned in front of a screen.

What can we do?

- 1. Establish rules and limits** with regard to the amount of time kids spend in front of screens.
- 2. Join in the screen time fun.** Even though this seems counter productive, parents should take a genuine, interest in what kids are doing on their screens, especially the games they are playing. This time is meant for the parents to learn about the games and why kids like them. Parents should play electronic games with their children. Watch your child play and ask him to teach you the game. Children, even early adolescents, want their parents to watch them play these games, so they can show off their skill.
Genuine interest in their electronic games **does not encourage** kids to play these games more often. Instead, it invites more conversation. Children are also more willing, at a later time, to engage with us in interactive, nonelectronic play.
- 3. Before setting limits, ask kids for their ideas.** Engage kids in the search for solutions. When we incorporate some of their suggestions into a plan, they have part ownership and are more likely to cooperate.
- 4. Create screen-free hours for the entire family.** Create a No Device or Screen hour in the home, in which **all electronics are turned off** for the entire family.

Screen Free Activities:

- Play card games and board games
- Do puzzles and drawing
- Building, wrestling, play catch
- Read or listen to books



Most children still prefer interactive play with a parent over watching television or playing video games. When we limit screen time we begin to instill important life lessons. We have established a principle of self-discipline. Kids learn that they can have all the benefits of screens—entertainment ,and access to information —with less urgent need for immediate gratification, a crucial nutrient for their future emotional health.