

# Tablet Tips for Parents



## **Treat it like a book & together, take a look**

Very young children learn best through interactions with their caregivers. Cuddle up and use apps *together* - the same way you would share a book.

## **Ask your child to tell you about what's going on in the app**

This will help build your child's narrative skills -- an important building block when learning to read!

## **Let your child lead**

The first time your child explores an app, encourage them to navigate at their own pace. If they choose the wrong response, see if they can self-correct or if they get frustrated. Getting frequently stuck means an app is either above their level or is a poorly designed app.

## **Let apps inspire "real world play"**

Does the app have a robot character? Do a robot dance together or build a robot out of recycled materials.

## **Choose apps that build relationships**

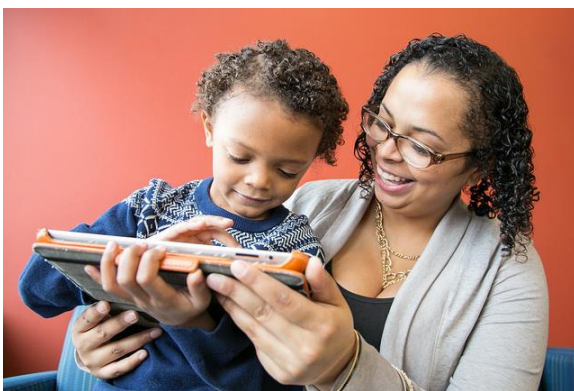
Apps can inspire conversation, provide a way to explore new topics or challenges side-by-side, and have fun together!

## **Choose apps that engage higher thinking skills**

The more kids use their mind, body, social skills and/or problem-solving skills while using an app, the more they will *learn* (even if it looks like play). If they're just poking the screen once to make something happen, they're not really learning.

## **Play through apps yourself first**

Previewing apps before sharing them with your child will help you decide if the app is high quality, age appropriate and one your child would enjoy.



## **Be a Media Model**

Be aware of your own media usage. Children learn best by example.

## **Teach your child a variety of calming techniques**

When children get upset, it's easy to reach for the quick fix of a screen. Remember to balance that response with other calming techniques as well-- slow breaths, talking about their feelings, going for a walk, having a big stomping contest or just crying within a warm, loving hug.

## **Find your family's balance**

Some children respond best to specific time limits on their screen-time, others find that more flexible, project-based parameters suit them better. You know your child best. Create a conscious media usage plan together. Building healthy media habits now will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Discover great apps at [www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/kids/apps!](http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/kids/apps!)