**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)!