Croydon
Children's Speech & Language Therapy
Service

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USING iPADS AND TABLETS WITH YOUR CHILD

Why iPads & tablets are easy to use

- They are very intuitive - a child can easily interact and engage with a tablet by touching the screen, even if they don't fully understand what their actions mean. This can sometimes hide a child's difficulties with understanding.

- Children can often work devices and complete activities independently - without help from adults.

- Users often don't have to produce language to complete activities.

- Tablet devices suit some learning styles because they are very visual and touch based.

- They are easier for people who have difficulty using their hands, find it hard to write, or use a PC. This is because only the pointer finger is needed to use most functions.

- Tablet devices can be fun and visually attractive to children.

> Children show 'cause & effect' skills when they use an iPad

Key things to remember about using tablets

- They should never replace interaction with other people.

- For optimal use, tablets should generate 'talk time' between carers and children, rather than replace it – this is crucial for language development.

- Even if bought primarily for your child, refer to the tablet as yours. This makes it easier to control access, as it appears not to belong to the child. NB: this will be different for children who use the iPad as a communication device as they require access all the time.

- Tablet devices can be great for learning, but don't provide the full range of sensory experiences a child needs which can be found in the physical environment (e.g., smell, texture, movement, balance…).

Screen time recommendations

Ages	Recommendations*
Under 2 years	At this age children <u>should not spend any</u> time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer, electronic games, and tablets).
2 to 5 years	Time watching TV and use of other electronic media should be limited to <u>less than one hour</u> per day.
5 to 12 years	Time watching TV and use of other electronic media should be limited to <u>less than two hours</u> per day.

* Information taken from: Department of Health and Ageing (2004) Australia's Physical Activity Recommendations, Canberra.

Early TV watching has been associated with delays in language, cognitive development, and attention problems during childhood. While the educational benefit of TV for children under 2 years is questionable, the benefits of interactions between children and their carers are well documented.

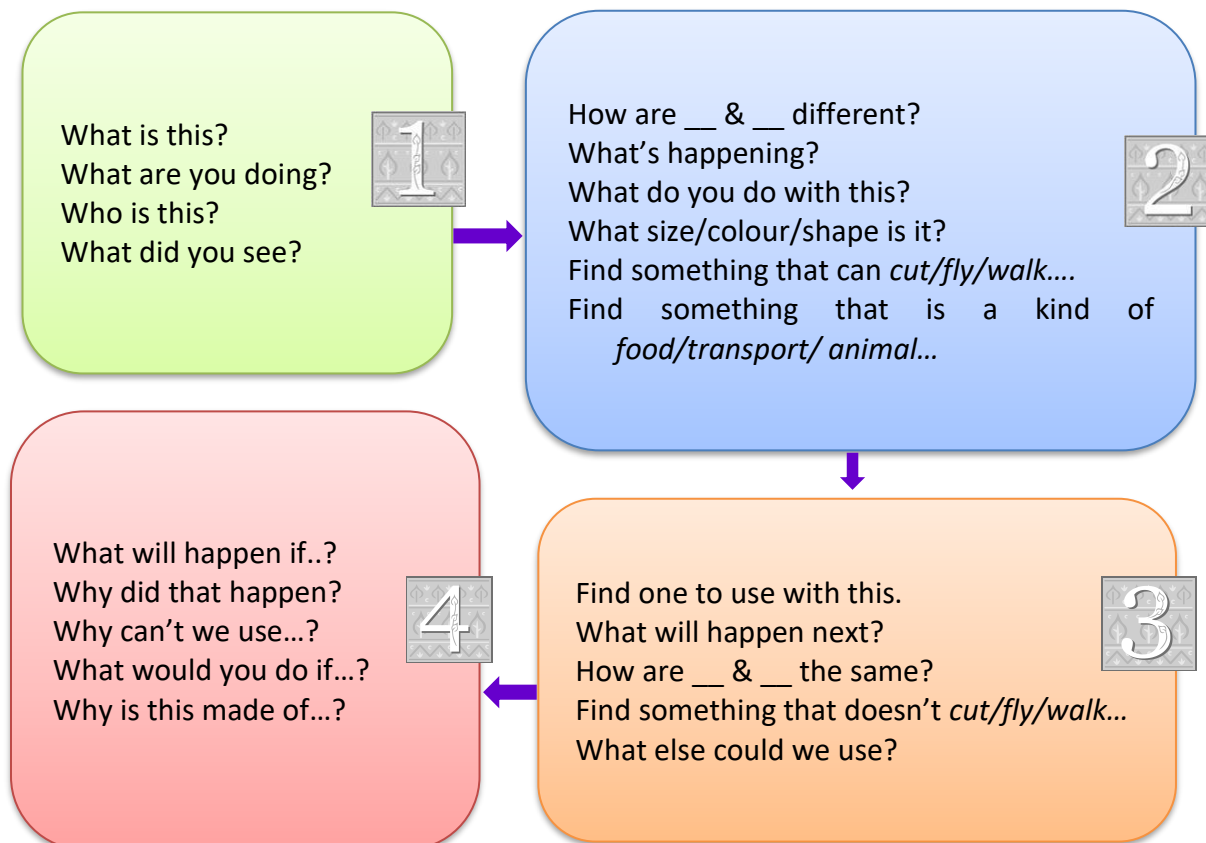Excellent care for all   Home | Community | Hospital

Things to look for in an educational app

- Letter formation/handwriting apps should reinforce correct letter formation (start and end points) and not accept incorrect formation.

- A good learning programme is designed so that you can interact with your child.

- Best learning apps adapt to the child's skills; i.e., they make it harder when they get things right and make it easier when they are still learning

- Consider how 'visually busy' the graphics are. Some apps are over-complicated with visual information (colour and movement), which can be distracting.

- Know for what you want the app to be used. No app will be everything for every child. Select an app to do a specific task. More than one app may be used for the same subject area.

- Apply what is learnt while using an app in 'real world' situations. Don't allow a child to use the tablet for only 'virtual reality' learning. This is extremely important with language apps.

- Consider the accent of any voice output – will it impact on learning?

How you can interact while using a device (or in everyday activities)

- Sit with your child while s/he completes activities.

- Look for teachable moments. Pause the app and talk about what you have both seen.

- Ask a variety of questions and make lots of comments. Some questions are easier to answer than others:

1
What is this?
What are you doing?
Who is this?
What did you see?

2
How are __ & __ different?
What's happening?
What do you do with this?
What size/colour/shape is it?
Find something that can *cut/fly/walk….*
Find something that is a kind of *food/transport/ animal…*

3
Find one to use with this.
What will happen next?
How are __ & __ the same?
Find something that doesn't *cut/fly/walk…*
What else could we use?

4
What will happen if..?
Why did that happen?
Why can't we use…?
What would you do if…?
Why is this made of…?

How to control access within the iPad

- Recent iPads and iPhones have methods to restrict certain functions. Two methods are;

  - *Restrictions*. Disables access to specific apps and can restrict 'In-App' and iTunes purchases, 'Multi-player' games, 'rated content', music, movies, etc. This setting is found in:

    - Settings ⇨ General ⇨ Restrictions ⇨ Select desired restrictions

  - *Guided Access*. Prevents the child from flipping between apps by restricting their ability to exit apps without a passcode and creating 'out of bounds' areas within apps. This function is found in:

    - Settings ⇨ General ⇨ Accessibility ⇨ Guided Access ⇨ Select 'On' ⇨ Set passcode

    - Activate within app: 3 x click home button ⇨ circle out of bounds areas ⇨ select 'Start'.

    - The defined area will be the same spot on the screen for all screens of that app (check that this does not interfere with necessary app controls).

    - To end: 3 x click home button ⇨ enter passcode ⇨ select 'End'.

    - Some commercially available products also perform this function (e.g., *Bubcaps*)

Suggestions for setting boundaries around electronic device use

- Set viewing time and content limitations for children – encourage your child to have an active role in selecting what programs s/he wishes to view / engage in within these limitations.

- Avoid 'screen time' during times of the day when children could be outside, engaging in active play and exploration; if necessary, record TV programmes so they can be seen at a more suitable time.

- Have 'screen free' mealtimes – allowing time for family conversation and interaction.

- Make your children's bedrooms 'screen free' zones.

- Turn the TV off or remove tablet when the scheduled activity is finished – having the TV on in the background can distract children while they are playing or interacting with others.

- Be prepared with active play alternatives when the children want to turn on the TV or tablet:

Inside / Waiting-room Activities: Books; Colouring; Singing; 'I spy'; Puppets	**Outside Activities:** Ball games; Walking; Hide & seek; Swings
Creative & Pretending Activities: Craft; Board games; Dress ups; Dolls, Cars; Blocks	**Make children your 'helper'** Give them a job within your routines.

The most important thing you can do to help your child's development is to increase <u>your</u> interactions with them in <u>everyday settings</u>