

What you need to know about television

Television is part of our lives. As parents, it is important to understand the effects that watching too much television can have on young children.

Television can open up the world to you and your child

You can share amazing experiences you normally wouldn't encounter in your everyday life.

Babies and young children are just learning about language

It is important that you spend some time each day with the television off, so you can play with your child. If the room is quiet your child can then focus on you and the words you are saying. Very young babies do not need to watch TV, it can be too stimulating for them.

Children learn about communication from the people who care for them

They learn how to interact, listen and respond, so their social skills develop. Watching TV only involves one-way communication. This may cause your child to have difficulties in listening to you.

- **Choose programmes that are suitable for your child's age**
For children under two these may be slower paced. Children aged between three and five benefit from programmes that require them to join in and include familiar and new content.
- **Spend time watching the programmes with your child**
This way you can talk about what is happening and reinforce their understanding. Switch off the TV when the programme has ended. Talk about the story or sing songs from the show.
- **Remember we all need time to wind down and chill out**
Make TV a treat for your child rather than just a background noise. Make sure you both get the most out of it.

Remember:

Spend time each day with the TV switched off

If you do have the TV on share programmes with your child, so you can talk about them together.

