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# When and how to allow children access to tablets and smartphones

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## You should know...

Alongside traditional devices such as the television or computer, what is becoming increasingly popular are smartphones and tablets. Although appropriately selected online content can have a positive impact on children's development, too early and intensive use of electronic devices can also be harmful to them.

During the first years of life, the human brain develops most intensively. For this development, the child needs to experience the world with all the senses – to see, feel, hear, and touch. A child's brain also needs intensive interactions with other people. Neither television nor computers can replace contact with carers or other children, playing and reading books together and other experiences through which children learn about the world around them.

## What to do?

What do we do when we have already accustomed a one- or two-year-old child to using a smartphone and are unable to care for him or her without allowing access to these devices? Or how do we respond to situations where children use devices in a way that causes us concern?

Situations mentioned include:

- the child reacts with irritability and even aggression in cases where access to mobile devices is restricted or denied,
- the child's difficulty in sleeping and other daily activities is likely to be due to their use of the tablet or smartphone,
- the child refuses or is reluctant to engage in activities unrelated to electronic media,
- the tablet and smartphone are the leading topics discussed by the child.

## Remember:

- For a pre-school child, online activities should only be an addition to attractive forms of time spending without electronic devices.
- Carers should set rules among themselves about the use of mobile devices by the child and enforce them with consistency.
- If the situation is getting out of hand, it is worth seeking help from a child psychologist and finding out how to set boundaries with your child, how to accompany your child's emotions, and how to spend time actively with your child.





## **Don't be a tablet parent**

Don't give your child a tablet or smartphone before they are 2 years old

Occasionally

No more than  
15 minutes at  
a time

On a single day  
no more than  
30 minutes

Not as a reward

**For a child  
aged 3–6 years  
a tablet/  
smartphone:**

Not when eating

Not before  
bedtime

As often as  
possible together  
with the carer

Only selected  
content



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The material is based on the publication: 'Mum, Dad, Tablet. When and how to allow children access to tablets and smartphones'.

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