



Bridge Hall Primary School

"Where Every Child Matters and Every Day Counts"

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Dear Parents and Carers,

At Bridge Hall Primary, we are committed to supporting your child's learning, health, and well-being during their vital early years. In today's digital world, finding the right balance with technology can be challenging, so we want to share the latest Government Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance on screen time, along with some practical tips and fun, screen-free activities you can easily try at home.

Key Recommendations

- **Under-Twos:** Avoid solo screen use; only use screens for shared video calls or bonding activities that involve talking and interaction.
- **Aged Two to Five:** Limit total screen use to **one hour or less each day**.
- **No Bedtime Screens:** Keep devices out of bedrooms and turn them off **at least one hour before bed** to protect sleep quality.
- **Mealtime Breaks:** Keep mealtimes completely **screen-free** to encourage family conversation.
- **Choose Slow Content:** Pick **slow-paced, predictable programs** and avoid fast social media videos or over-stimulating AI toys.
- **Co-Viewing:** Never leave young children to watch screens alone; **talk, ask questions, and engage** with them about what is on the display.
- **No Background TV:** Turn off TVs and tablets when not in direct use so they do not distract from active play.

Simple Screen-Free Play Ideas

Young children learn best through active, open-ended play. Here are simple, low-prep activities grouped by type:

Sensory & Messy Play

- **Water play:** Fill a washing-up bowl with water, plastic cups, spoons, and sponges.
- **Playdough station:** Provide child-safe dough with rolling pins, cookie cutters, or safety scissors.
- **Sensory bins:** Fill a shallow tray with uncooked rice, oats, or dried pasta and hide small toy animals inside.



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Creative & Imaginative Play

- **Cardboard box creations:** Turn delivery boxes into cars, houses, or spaceships using crayons and stickers.
- **Blanket forts:** Drape sheets over chairs to create a cosy reading nook or secret den.
- **Dress-up box:** Collect old hats, scarves, bags, and clean clothes for role-play.

Active & Physical Play

- **Indoor obstacle course:** Lay down cushions to balance on, chairs to crawl under, and a blanket to jump over.
- **Action songs:** Sing and dance to action rhymes like *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* or *The Hokey Cokey*.
- **Balloon tennis:** Use hands or paper plates to keep a balloon from touching the floor.

How to Reduce Screen Time (Without Meltdowns)

Reducing screen time requires consistency and gradual changes. Try these practical strategies:

- **Use a visual timer:** Young children do not understand "five more minutes". Use a sand timer or a visual countdown app so they can see when screen time is ending.
- **Pair transitions with a routine:** Avoid turning off the screen abruptly. Instead, say, *"When the timer rings, the iPad goes to sleep and we go to the park."*
- **Create a "parking garage":** Designate a specific basket or charging spot where devices "go to sleep" when not in use.
- **The "first / then" rule:** Establish clear rules where active play, reading, or chores must happen before screen time is allowed (e.g., *"First we get dressed, then we watch one song"*).
- **Involve them in chores:** Toddlers love helping. Substitute screen time by asking them to help wash vegetables, pair socks, or wipe down tables.