

Tips for Enhancing TV Learning Experiences

1. Be choosy about the shows you and your child watch

Read online and print [reviews](#) of shows, looking for ones appropriate for your child's age and stage of development. Avoid programs that could frighten your child and programs that show characters resolving conflict with violence. Rather than trusting your luck to find something suitable, keep a list of shows that you know are appealing, educational and inspiring. Turn off the screen when a program you have selected is over.



2. Watch TV together

[Watching together](#) is the best way to know what your child is learning. You can use this opportunity to answer questions, clarify content you don't think is appropriate, remind young children that cartoon characters do things that people can't, and encourage literacy skills. Don't hesitate to ask questions that encourage your child to invent her own dialogue or vary the plot.

Here are some TV conversation starters: What happened in the beginning of the movie? Which character would you like to be? If you could make up a new story with the same characters, how would your story end? Do you think what happened in the show is what would happen in real life? How would you have handled that situation in the real world?

3. Use TV shows and videos to enhance listening skills

Turn [TV shows](#) into a listening game: While watching a familiar show or movie, ask your child to turn her back to the TV set. When a familiar character begins to speak or sing, ask her to identify who it is just by listening. Watch a scene and then ask them questions to see what they heard.



4. Learn more by reading a related book



Look for related topics or books with similar characters. Help your children to compare and contrast what is similar and different between the book and what you watched.

For older children, pick something they found interesting in the show or movie and find out more about the topic. Encourage them to share what they learn by making a poster or writing a mini book.

5. Use television characters in learning activities

Kids feel connected to their favorite characters. Referencing your child's favorite characters in everyday learning can make new concepts more approachable. One easy way to do this is by using television characters as examples in creative play and arts activities.

Kids can practice early literacy skills by writing a letter to a character from a tv show or movie. For older kids, encourage them to write letters from one character on the show to another. What would they say to each other? How do they think those characters feel and how would they respond? This builds empathy and the ability to see things from others' perspectives.

6. Prevent screen time from replacing family time and active play

Limit your child's screen time. This will guarantee uninterrupted time spent with you, playing with his/her peers, or exploring the environment. Set and maintain your own family boundaries around "non-screen" time, like meals and before bed.



7. Make a Screen Time Plan

You can make your own family screen time plan to make sure everyone is on the same page. Every family is unique, so create a family screen time use plan that works for you! We love this one from Common Sense Media: <http://bit.ly/2x5tUx1>