

Better Ways To Entertain Kids with Tech - Ages 2-6

BETTER OPTIONS WHEN you REALLY NEED TO USE A DEVICE

Life is busy and sometimes we just need to entertain our kids with a device while we get something done. Certain types of device use are much better than others for ages 2-6. Research is showing that interactive screen use (iPad, tablet, and smartphone) raises dopamine too high for preschoolers, which dysregulates their mood and leads to tech tantrums. Interactive screen time is also full of Persuasive Design, and too much of it wires their brain for instant gratification, short attention span and can make real life feel boring.

No screen options:

1. **Audiobooks** - Kids 4 and up can be as easily entertained by an audiobook as they can by a screen and it's so much better for their brain. Free audiobooks are available through the library with Libby (libbyapp.com), and Spotify, AudibleKids and Epic! have lots of audiobooks for a paid subscription. (See last page for audiobook suggestions.)
2. **Homemade Audiobooks** - For younger toddlers who still need pictures, use the voice memo app (Apple) or the Recorder app (Android) on your phone to record yourself reading their favorite picture books. Make sure to say "turn the page" every time a page needs to be turned. Your child can listen to the recording of you reading while looking at the book and turning pages themselves. Toddlers love to hear the same story over and over and over so you might be surprised by how much mileage you get out of a single recording. Note: Homemade audiobooks work great with books you've already read to them many times, but not so well with new books they aren't very familiar with.
3. **Podcast stories** - There are lots of great storytelling podcasts for preschoolers. Check out Circle Round (www.wbur.org/podcasts/circleround), Tinkercast (tinkercast.com), Little Stories For Tiny People (www.littlestoriestinypeople.com), Julie's Library (www.julieslibraryshow.org/episodes), Molly of Denali Podcast (pbskids.org/videos/molly-of-denali/podcasts)
4. **Musical Story Recordings** - Kid's love musical story recordings. On YouTube, you can find Peter and the Wolf (best one is narrated by Patrick Stewart), Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra (narrated by Sean Connery) and Carnival of the Animals (best one is narrated by Joanna Lumley).
5. **Yoto Mini** - This is a simple, screen-free audiobook player for kids that they can operate themselves.

(Tips for listening: Have them listen on a bluetooth speaker so they're not distracted by your phone. Young children will listen much longer when they have something to do with their hands. Set them up so they can draw, color, build blocks or Duplo, or any other quiet activity while listening).

