



Make “tech time” an engaging, language-rich experience. Interact with each other as you interact with apps.

Your child will learn more from your interactions together than from an app alone.

Like a print book, an app is just a jumping-off point for conversation and imagination.

Choosing Apps for Your Child

Look for apps with:

Clean, uncluttered displays, not so busy they will be distracting

Meaningful interactive elements

Plain, clear, highly legible fonts, especially when letter or number recognition is part of the action

Intuitive wayfinding that is not too complicated for children to puzzle through with minimal adult help

Avoid apps with:

Loud, busy, cluttered displays

“Interactive elements” that don’t add value

Ads or in-app purchases that are not easily ignored or keep popping up

A primary mission to gather coins/points/etc. to purchase or unlock more features

More video than interactive experiences

“Coloring book” features; instead, choose apps that allow free-drawing



Made possible, in part, by funding from the Minnesota Department of Education through a Library Services and Technology Act grant (LS-00-13-0024-13) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

HCL B7 6/2014

Apps and Your Prereader

Tips for parents and caregivers

Exploring carefully selected apps together with children can help them get ready to read.



Hennepin County
Library

www.hclib.org



Talk, sing, read, write and play

as you explore apps with your child. It's fun and can supplement the non-digital ways you spend time together.

Talk together

Make sure you two are doing the talking, not the app. Ask questions, have conversations and ask your child to recount the action of the app later, when the device is turned off. Children learn oral language when you talk with them. Studies have shown that oral language cannot be learned from prerecorded voices or screens.

Sing together

Learn new songs or enjoy well-loved classics as you use singing apps, then keep singing together long after the device is turned off. Singing slows down language so children can hear the different sounds that make up words, and it teaches children phonics, vocabulary and general knowledge about the world.

Read together

Enjoy eBook apps together as you would print books. Let your child take the lead and talk about what's happening in the story. Always read eBook apps aloud, disabling prerecorded options to promote interaction. Reading together is the number-one way you can get your child ready to read and ready for school.

Play together

Look for play apps that allow children to pretend, create, investigate and problem-solve, and ask them to describe what's happening. Play gives children a chance to use words and explore concepts that may not come up otherwise. They learn about their world through play, and they learn best when they play with you.

Write together

Look for apps that ask your child to do more than simply tap the screen. Using fingers to draw, pinch and expand on screen helps develop small-motor control, an essential skill for learning to write. Writing with a finger is a great way for children who haven't yet mastered holding a crayon or pencil to start down the path to learning to write.