

Interactive Screen Time Strategies

There are several strategies for early learning providers to make screen time interactive and support children in making connections to the real world. These strategies include¹³:

- **Talking about the program or game:** Asking children open-ended questions can help children process their thoughts about what they've just seen. For example: "Did you like the grandma in the story?" or "How did you feel when puppy got lost in the show?"
- **Answering children's questions:** This helps them make sense of the content to which they are being exposed. Take the time to respond to all questions, even if it means pausing the show or game, or the answer to the question seems obvious. In some cases, children are needing affirmation to reinforce their understanding of new concepts. For example: If the child asks, "Are they digging in the dirt to plant a seed?", a reinforcing response might be "Yes, the gardener is using the shovel to dig up the dirt and plant a seed. I wonder what will grow. What do you think will grow?"
- **Pointing out objects on the screen and naming them:** This helps children make sense of new objects and reinforce what the object is, while also building vocabulary. For example: "That big machine is a bulldozer. The construction has started!"
- **Being physically active while using a screen:** For example: Dance along to music that is played, or move like the animals on the screen.
- **Making connections to a child's "real life":** This helps children make the connection of what they are learning and what they already know. For example: "That is a cat! Do you have a cat at your house?" or "This is a puzzle app. We get to complete the puzzle on the tablet, just like when we do wooden puzzles during free time".
- **When the show is over, acting it out or putting a skill into use:** For example: "That was a neat show about trains. Let's get out our train set and build our own track like it was in the show!"

¹³ Zero to Three. (2009, February 16). Television and the Under 3 Crowd. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/149-television-and-the-under-3-crowd>