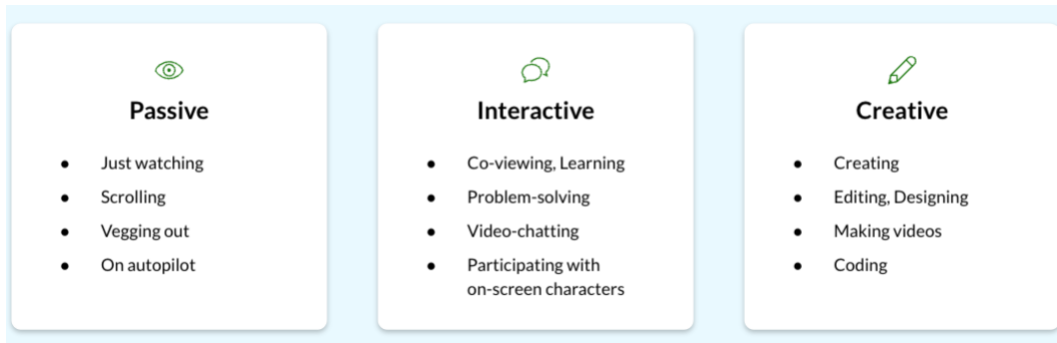# Omaha Public Schools Screen Time Guidelines (For Families)

All screen time is not created equal. ***What*** your child engages with online is more important than ***how*** long. There is evidence that rules focusing on content, co-viewing, and communication are associated with better well-being outcomes than rules focused on screen time. Consider interactive and creative screen consumption vs. passive.

Passive	Interactive	Creative
• Just watching • Scrolling • Vegging out • On autopilot	• Co-viewing, Learning • Problem-solving • Video-chatting • Participating with on-screen characters	• Creating • Editing, Designing • Making videos • Coding

Screen Time Guidelines from the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry:
- **Younger than 18 months**: Avoid screen time except for video chats with loved ones.
- **Age 18–24 months**: Find high-quality programming (if you introduce screen time) and watch or play together.
- **Age 2–5**: Limit non-educational screen time to one hour per day.
- **Six and older**: Balance screen use with reading, hobbies, and time with friends and family. Make sure it doesn't interfere with sleep, exercise, and other healthy behaviors.

Family Tech Planners:
There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to screen use, and each family is different. Consider filling out a family tech planner to set expectations, facilitate conversations, and create a screen-use family plan that works for everyone.

Technology Tips for Families:
- **Co-view or co-play with your child(ren)**: Asking questions about the characters or plot in a TV show or having a child teach a family member how to play a video game transforms the on-screen experience from passive consumption to active.
- **Stay connected to what your child(ren) is doing online**: Being curious and asking non-judgmental questions will make it more likely for a child to share what they're doing online and whom they're talking to.

Are you looking for more screen time tips? Check out additional information from Common Sense Media.
Read: Advice articles in English or Spanish.
Watch: How Much is Too Much in English or Spanish.

Sources:

- How Much Screen Time is Okay for my Kids? – Common Sense Media
- Screen Time and Children – AACAP

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