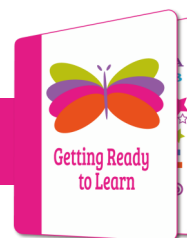# GETTING READY TO LEARN

"Screen Time—use it wisely!"

Key Messages:

Screen time is a normal part of life for most children. Screen time includes the amount of time your child spends watching TV, using computers, tablets and smartphones. It can be part of a healthy lifestyle but for young children it is recommended that screen time be kept to a minimum.

For young children it is important that:-

- Your child is getting lots of healthy, fun activities, including physical activity, reading, creative play and social time with family and friends.
- Your child has a healthy sleep routine**!** A healthy, balanced lifestyle for children includes enough good-quality sleep. Screens should be avoided before bed as this will affect how quickly your child falls asleep. If possible, avoid screens or TV at least an hour before bed.
- Screens should be kept out of bedrooms at night.
- When children do use screens, they should only watch or use quality content suitable for their age group.
- Try to be with your child while they are on screens and interact with them regarding the content.

Tips To Try

Set an example: think about your own use of technology – do you put your phone away at meal times? Are you distracted by notifications instead of paying attention to the people around you? Do you limit your own time on digital technology?

- ⇒ Put yourself in control Make use of the parental controls available on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. Find out how by visiting internetmatters.org
- ⇒ Make rules about screen time. It is never too early to start setting rules about when and for how long. These rules should include where your child can use their screens eg only in a communal space and not in their bedroom. When they can use their screens. How your child can use their screens - what sites they are allowed to access.
- ⇒ Aim for short screen time sessions so use a timer to limit screen use and to set breaks. Do something active when the timer ends eg play outside
- ⇒ Use safe search engines such as swiggle.org.uk or kids-serarch.com. Safe search settings can also be activated on google and other search engines as well as YouTube. You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetyscentre.
- ⇒ Or set your homepage to a child-friendly site such as CBeebies and give them a user account which only allows access to sites and apps you've chosen.
- ⇒ Keep other devices out of reach and use passwords so they can't go online without asking you first.