

One Childhood Plate, Changing Needs

Prioritise the experiences children need. Then consider where technology helps and where it gets in the way.



Priorities

- Responsive relationships and play
- Age-appropriate friendships and social connection
- Language, learning and creativity
- Sleep, rest and emotional wellbeing
- Physical activity and outdoor time
- Adults modelling thoughtful technology use

Relationships and connection

- 0–2 yrs: responsive relationships
- 3–5 yrs: shared play, conversation and supported friendships
- 6–12 yrs: friendships, family connection and belonging
- 13–18 yrs: trusted relationships, belonging and growing independence

Play and creativity

- 0–2 yrs: peek-a-boo, sensory play and exploring safe objects
- 3–5 yrs: pretend play, drawing, building and music
- 6–12 yrs: imaginative play, making, games and hobbies
- 13–18 yrs: creative interests, music, making and games

Rest and wellbeing

- 0–2 yrs: age-appropriate sleep, comfort and responsive routines
- 3–5 yrs: build healthy sleep habits and rituals
- 6–12 yrs: regular sleep, downtime and support with emotions
- 13–18 yrs: sufficient sleep, regular routines and emotional support

Movement and outdoors

- 0–2 yrs: supervised floor play and opportunities to move and explore
- 3–5 yrs: unstructured and outdoor play
- 6–12 yrs: play and physical activity
- 13–18 yrs: enjoyable movement, outdoor time and physical activity

Learning and discovery

- 0–2 yrs: everyday conversation, books, songs and exploration
- 3–5 yrs: stories, questions, conversation and hands-on discovery
- 6–12 yrs: school learning, curiosity, practical skills and discovery
- 13–18 yrs: develop academic and life skills



Where technology fits*

Recreational technology should leave room for the foundations of childhood.

Under 2	avoid sedentary screen use.
Age 2	No more than 1 hour of sedentary screen use daily; less is better
Preschoolers	≤1 hour of sedentary screen use daily; less is better.
6–12 yrs	≤2 hours of sedentary recreational screen use daily; schoolwork excluded.
13–17 yrs	≤2 hours of sedentary recreational screen use daily; schoolwork excluded.
18 yrs	agree limits around sleep, activity and responsibilities

*Brief, adult-supported video calls with familiar people differ from passive viewing. Communication aids, disability supports and required learning need separate consideration from recreational use.