

# How Much Screen Time is Too Much for Preschoolers?

Screens are everywhere—cartoons on TV, rhymes on phones, even Chachu’s tablet! For 3–5-year-olds, some screen time is fine, but too much can affect sleep and learning. Here’s a guide for Pakistani parents.

## Why Screen Time Matters

Screens can teach numbers or English, but overuse can delay language, reduce playtime, and cause tantrums. Balance is key.

## Recommended Limits

- **Age 3–5:** 1 hour max daily of high-quality content (educational shows, interactive apps).
- **Under 2:** Avoid screens except video calls with Nana.
- **All ages:** No screens 1–2 hours before bed to protect sleep.

## Choosing Quality Content

- **Educational:** Pick shows like *Sesame Street*, *Dora the Explorer*, or Urdu apps teaching Alif-Bay.
- **Interactive:** Apps where kids tap or answer are better than passive videos.
- **Desi picks:** Watch *Motu Patlu* or *Qari* for Islamic rhymes, but limit to 20–30 minutes.
- **Co-watch:** Sit together and talk about the show: “Why is Dora helping the monkey?”

## Setting Boundaries

1. **Make a schedule:** Allow screens after lunch or before bath, not on demand.
2. **Use timers:** Say, “When the bell rings, TV’s off.” It reduces fights.
3. **Create screen-free zones:** No screens at meals or in bedrooms.
4. **Offer alternatives:** Swap screens for puzzles, coloring, or outdoor “Oonch Neech.”
5. **Model limits:** Put your phone down during family time to set an example.

## Pakistani Context

- **Joint families:** Agree with Dadi or Baji on screen rules to avoid mixed signals.
- **Power cuts:** Use outages as a chance for storytelling or board games.
- **Cultural shows:** Balance desi cartoons with real-world play to teach tehzeeb.

## Signs of Too Much Screen Time

- Tantrums when screens are off.
- Trouble sleeping or focusing.
- Less interest in toys or friends.
- Copying aggressive cartoon behavior.

If you notice these, cut back gradually and talk to a pediatrician if concerns persist.

## **Why It Works**

Limited, quality screen time entertains without stealing your child's curiosity. It also leaves room for desi rhymes and family fun.

Set that timer and grab a puzzle—your preschooler's ready for real-world magic!