SCREEN
SENSE

FIVE TIPS

to Make the Most of **Video Chats**



Video chat using apps such as FaceTime and Skype is a great way for young children to stay in touch with long-distance family and friends. Through video chat, children have an opportunity to to build a relationship, communicate with, and learn from a loved one on the screen.

Here are five ways to help your child get the max from screen-time conversations:

1. Make it a social, interactive experience.
Try rhymes, songs, dancing, finger plays, and games like peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek that young children can participate in and enjoy with their screen partner.

2. Use props.
Encourage the screen partner to read one of the child's favorite books, as the child follows along with his own copy. Or, the video partner can play with a toy car while the child rolls her toy car. Puppets and stuffed animals also are great props for playing together virtually. Also, sharing a snack together is a favorite of young children.

3. Be the "hands and heart" of the the person on-screen.
When the screen partner "tickles" your baby's tummy, give your child's tummy a tickle, too. When a grandparent leans toward the screen to "kiss" your toddler, you can give him a kiss on the cheek. By taking this role, you help nurture the relationship between the child and their on-screen friend.

4. Explain any technical difficulties.
Tell the child why the call dropped, or why the video partner may appear to "freeze" on the screen or not be looking directly at her. Explaining these experiences in simple terms helps children better understand both the technology and the interaction. It can also help screen partners adjust factors on their side (like the angle of their webcam) to improve the video chat.

5. Let children take the lead with the technology as they grow.
For example, toddlers can learn how to touch the green button to call or red button to hang up.

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