



# Gifts to Help Kids Be Active

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What gift do most kids have on their wish list for the holidays or an upcoming birthday? Probably some type of technology - from smartphones to tablets, to the latest video game. Before purchasing a gift that promotes more time in front of a screen, consider options that can help kids and families stay active throughout the year.

Why should we be concerned about children spending too much time in front of a screen? According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), overuse of digital media and screens may place children and teens at increased risk of obesity and sleep problems as well as negatively affect their performance at school. Here are the latest recommendations on media use from AAP:

- **Children younger than 2 years:** Except for video-chatting, the use of screen media should be discouraged.
- **Children ages 2 to 5:** Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should watch media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- **For children ages 6 and older:** Parents should place consistent limits on the time spent and types of media used. Make sure media does not take the place of sleep, physical activity, and other behaviors needed for good health.
- **Additional considerations:** Establish media-free time together as a family such as an evening meal or driving in the car. Assign media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms or dining rooms.



## Ideas for active gifts:

- Balls, flying discs or cones
- Scooters, bikes, and riding toys
- Roller blades or roller skates
- Bicycle helmets and other safety equipment
- Active music
- Kites or sand box toys
- Active board games
- Family membership to a family fitness center or children's museum
- Fishing poles
- Gardening equipment
- Sleds
- Hula hoops

## Sources:

1. Beyond Screen Time: Help Your Kids Build Healthy Media Use Habits, The American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://bit.ly/3WnDORQ>
2. Constantly Connected: Adverse Effects of Media on Children & Teens, The American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://bit.ly/1REB8Wi>

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