

2023 YOUTH SCREEN TIME TRENDS:  
HOW TO ENSURE  
QUALITY, SAFE  
AND EDUCATIONAL  
SCREEN TIME



# ANALYSIS OF SCREEN TIME OF CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 8 YEARS OLD

In today's digital world, many parents and caregivers are concerned about their children's overall exposure to screens, especially exposure for younger children.


A 2023 study, conducted by Lingokids, aims to identify parents' main concerns about kids ages 2-8 usage of screen time, as well as provide advice from leading experts and doctors on how to ensure that children's screen time is quality, beneficial, healthy and educational. It also outlines what kinds of screen time fails to meet these requirements.





To do so, this study has used various sources of data: from leading, external sources such as the American **Association of Pediatrics** and the **Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital** and Harvard Medical School to discover screen time habits and trends among children, to a survey of **1,800 parents** with children aged between 2 and 8 years in the US, and finally the consultation of experts in education, child health and parenting both within Lingokids and leading educators and doctors from outside the company.




## HIGH LEVEL STATS:

**63%**   
of kids ages 2-8 spend their screen time playing educational games.

**1 in 4**   
parents considered it appropriate to start using screens for their children when they are 3 years old.

**Only 50%**  
of parents are very involved in monitoring and regulating their children's screen time. 

**1 in 3**   
parents are worried their child is addicted to screens.

**64.6%**   
of parents believe that they themselves spend too much time in front of a screen.

# INDEX



## **SCREEN TIME: PARENTS' GUIDE TO CONTROL AND TIME LIMITS**

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Can screens be avoided altogether?	5
Children and screens: when to introduce them	6
Time control, limits and tips for managing screens for children	9
How to set a good example for your children	12

## **WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED NON-BENEFICIAL SCREEN TIME?**

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Can screen time be addictive for children?	14
Concerns about unsuitable content on screens	17
Security and online ads	20

## **WHAT IS QUALITY SCREEN TIME?**

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Use of interactive screens vs. passive screen time	22
Educational screen time	26

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>30</b>
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# SCREEN TIME: PARENTS' GUIDE TO CONTROL AND TIME LIMITS

## CAN SCREENS BE AVOIDED ALTOGETHER?

Technology is present in all aspects of our daily lives, therefore it is **nearly impossible to avoid it completely**. According to Lingokids' survey of 1,800 parents of children aged between 2 and 8, 55% are exposed to screens for 1-3 hours a day.

Other research confirmed this same range of screen time: According to a study conducted by the *Pew Research Center* in the United States, **children aged 2 to 5 spend an average of 3 hours a day in front of a screen. Experts believe that screens cannot be avoided completely.** *"There will always be screens in the home environment,"* noted Michael Rich, M.D., pediatrician, Director of the Digital Wellness Lab and Professor at Harvard Medical School. *"Interactive screen time is a language of our time, and it is how we learn, communicate, create and connect with others. The key is not restricting children's screen time, but rather guiding them on how to use it".*



## CHILDREN AND SCREENS: WHEN TO INTRODUCE THEM

When is the right time to introduce screens to children? The *World Health Organization's* general recommendations indicate that children under 1 year of age should not use screens. *The American Association of Pediatrics* (AAP) and the *Canadian Pediatric Society* (CPS) go further and recommend avoiding screen exposure before 18-24 months, with the exception of video calls with family and friends.

In terms of screen time for children 2 to 5 years of age, the same sources recommend that they use them for a maximum of one hour a day.

It is important that parents stick to screen time guidelines as much as they can, as numerous studies and associations, such as the *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, indicate that too much screen time can lead to problems such as disrupted sleep patterns, mood swings, lower grades, weight problems, or image problems.



**Out of 1800 parents surveyed, 1 in 4 considered it appropriate to start using screens for their children when they are 3 years old (25.2%),** followed closely by 22.6%, who do so between the ages of 5 and 6. 21.6% prefer to wait until they are 8 years old or more, and 16.7% between 6 and 7 years old. 9% do so between the ages of 0 and 3, with the rest preferring to wait until they are teenagers.

**Following expert recommendations, it is best to wait to introduce screens until the age of 2, as there are some risks associated with screen time when children are still at an early stage of cognitive and physical development.** According to studies such as that of the *Mayo Clinic*, it may carry some risks such as altered muscle tone, eye problems or lack of social interaction.



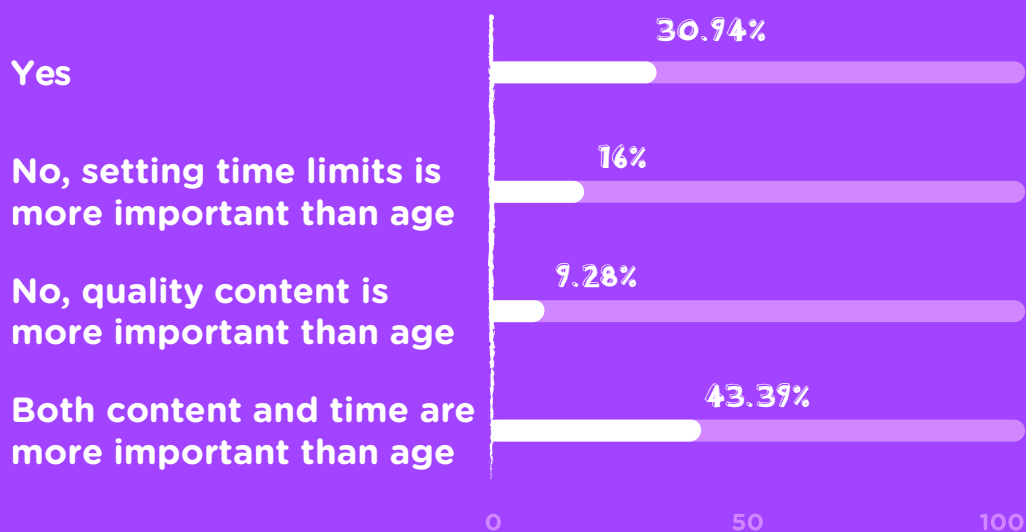
However, **there are also certain disadvantages to exposing children to screens at a later age,** as our experts pointed out. According to Dr. Barbara Gablehouse and Dr. Suzanne Barchers of the Lingokids educational advisory board, some of these include the danger of falling behind other children of the same age who are more used to electronic devices.

According to Dr. Barchers: *“Many parents believe that the ability to use these devices, as well as digital applications, will help their children prepare for school and even for future employment.”*

Still, in the survey, **68% of parents agree that limiting the content to which the child is exposed, is more important than limiting the age of the child when they are exposed to screens.** Therefore, it is not so much when they are introduced, but introducing them too early or too late that can have consequences and also how they are introduced, which this study will address later.



## Is age what you consider most important when it comes to your child's screen time?



## TIME CONTROL, LIMITS, AND TIPS FOR MANAGING CHILDREN'S SCREEN TIME



According to the Lingokids survey, **only 50% of parents are very involved in monitoring and regulating their children's screen time.** 80% of them use tools to monitor the time their children spend online, although 56% are flexible depending on the situation.

The experts consulted are clear. According to Regina Ascencio, educator, neuropsychologist, creator of **"Formar hoy"** and mother: *"Screen time should always be moderated by parents on a family and personal basis."*

Fernando Valenzuela and Rhona Anne Dick, members of the Lingokids Board of Education, agreed: *"Balance and moderation are key. Technology should enrich our perception of the world, but not become our world,"* they added.



**Experts like Fernando Valenzuela state that some platforms, such as Netflix, YouTube or television, are more difficult to monitor, as they do not offer sufficient parental time controls.** Others, such as educational apps, do. For example, 15 minutes of a learning app per day is enough time for children to start noticing the academic and social-emotional benefits. Moreover, the application offers a functionality through which parents can select and limit the maximum daily use.



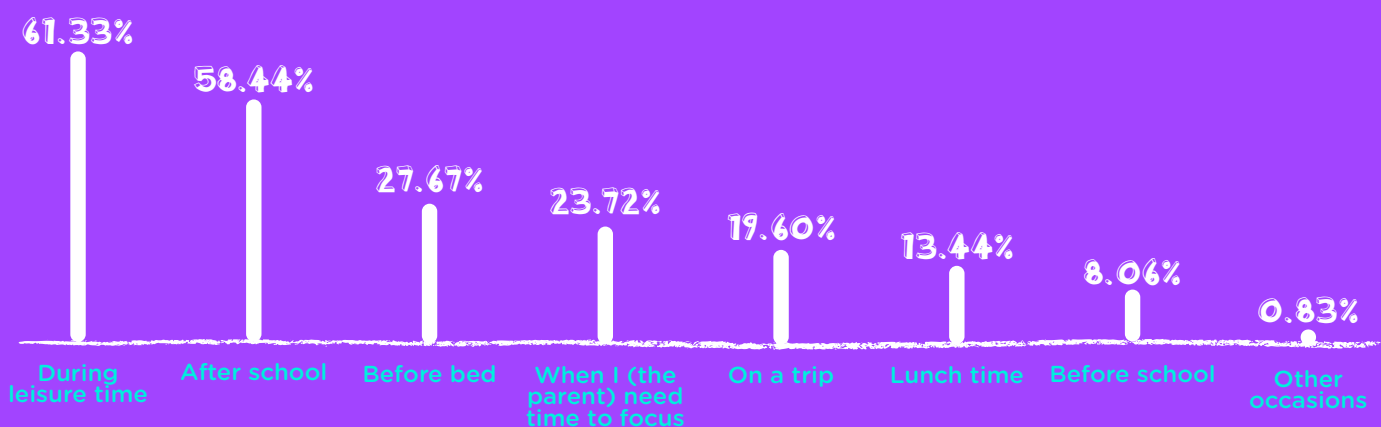
As they grow older, **unsupervised screen time need not be feared if it is put to good use**, and can even boost children’s independence. “Children should become more independent as they grow up and demonstrate good use of their electronic devices,” explained Ascencio, “but you have to make sure that the content is appropriate.”

According to the survey results, **the platforms that parents are most comfortable with their children using without direct supervision are educational apps. TikTok and YouTube are at the bottom of the list.** In addition, nearly 1 in 4 parents allow screen time when they need to focus on other tasks, and 19% during a trip, in both cases without direct supervision.

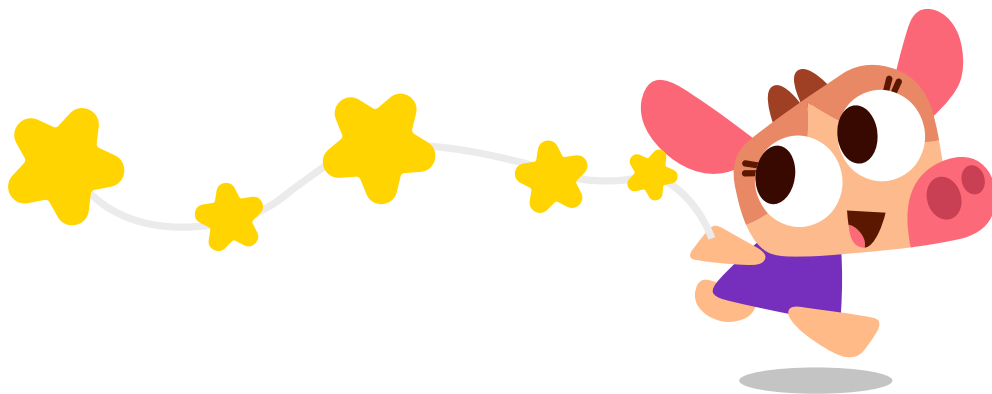


On the other hand, all experts in this study advised that there are two specific times of the day when it is best not to use screens: **before bed**, as it can disrupt sleep rhythms; and **during mealtimes**, to encourage family bonding.

## On which occasions does your kid use their screens the most?



In short, **the key is to control not only the time, but also the type of content** children are exposed to, to make sure it is age-appropriate, and that screens are not used at certain times of the day. If so, even screen time without direct and timely adult supervision is possible, as all such control and monitoring is done in advance.



## HOW TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR YOUR CHILDREN



It is important for us to be mindful of our own screen time usage, when we are trying to help our children limit their time as well. According to the survey conducted with 1800 parents, 60% believed that they do set a good example for their children, despite the fact that 64.6% believe that they spend too much time in front of a screen. In addition, **70% would like more information on how to help their children use screens correctly.**

*“As parents, we teach our children by example. Consistency is crucial, as well as not creating an “inconsistent environment.” You must have open conversations”,* advised Ascencio, an educationalist and neuropsychologist. Dr. Rich, Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health, explained: *“Parents can prevent their children from becoming, screen zombies‘ by teaching them that there are many different experiences out there and by being their role model.”*



It is therefore important that adults also establish their own use limits and lead by example in the use of beneficial content, which can be both educational and informative. This will help children understand the need for limits, the appropriate times of use and also the type of content that is age-appropriate.

## WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER HEALTHY, QUALITY SCREEN TIME?

*“For me, the key is watching or playing educational content or games respectively combined with open conversations, reinforcing that my son learns and deciding the amount of time he’s allowed to watch”.*

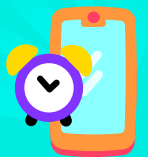
Mother of a 2-4 years old child

**RESIST MINDLESS SCROLLING IN FRONT OF YOUR KIDS, WHICH**



**SETS A BAD EXAMPLE.**

**CREATE A SCREEN TIME LIMIT FOR YOURSELF THAT**



**SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE.**



# WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED NON-BENEFICIAL SCREEN TIME?



Experts argue that, in addition to setting limits, we must monitor what our children consume and always ensure that the content they are exposed to is appropriate. However, **what is non-beneficial or unsuitable content for children?**

## CAN SCREEN TIME BE ADDICTIVE FOR CHILDREN?

**1 in 3 parents are worried their child is addicted to screens.**

Parents hear the term “**screen zombie**” all the time: children are becoming more and more hooked to screens and it is easy to worry whether they might become addicted to screen time or screen use. According to the Lingokids survey, the majority of parents (60%) consider that their children are not addicted to screens, which is great news, but it is certainly a concern for them (35% are worried about it).





According to numerous *medical studies*, exposure to screens, especially if excessive, activates the production of dopamine in the brain, a *neurotransmitter* that produces feelings of desire and may contribute to the development of addiction.

**However, do all platforms and content equally activate dopamine and consequently the risk of addiction?** The answer is no. Experts indicate that dopamine through screens is produced especially through elements such as validation on social networks and the infinite recommendations of their algorithms, immediate rewards, or unrealistic beauty standards.

*“Anything that produces a dopamine rush could be addictive. Examples are video games or competitive games that encourage immediate rewards. **These highs can be as addictive as sugar or drugs,**”*

Said Rhona Anne, Dick, a teacher.

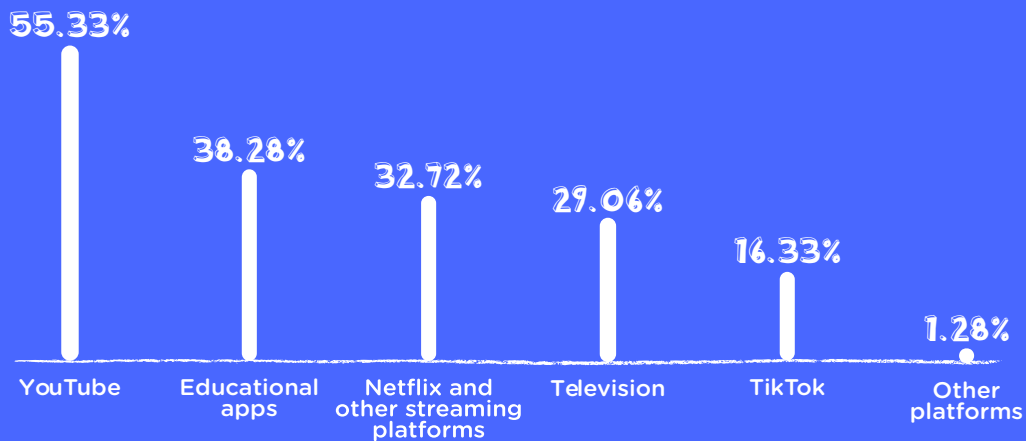
Fernando Valenzuela, a member of the Lingokids Education Board like Dick, confirms: *“social platforms, with their constant notifications and updates and the need for social validation, have addictive qualities.”* However, Regina Ascencio, an educator and neuropsychologist, pointed out that *“although screens have their own addictive component, **the role of the content seen on them is essential in the generation of addiction**”.*

**These experts also state that some platforms, such as YouTube or TikTok, may be more likely to generate these dopamine hits due to the type of content they offer and the way they present it,** as they induce infinite scrolling

and binge watching or viewing. Others, such as educational apps and games, offer content that, with just a few minutes of play a day, can have numerous academic and social-emotional benefits, and motivate children to continue learning both on and off screen. Additionally, in many cases, the pace of the games are less hectic and there are no elements related to social validation to drive a dopamine hit.



## Which platforms does your kid use the most?



## CONCERNS ABOUT UNSUITABLE CONTENT ON SCREENS

According to the survey, parents' **biggest concern (74.7%) with screen time is exposing their children to content that promotes violence**. They are also concerned that they are not offered **age-appropriate content (69.4%)** or that this content **is not educational (41.5%)**, despite the fact that 36.8% of children play with this type of content, and 43% watch it.

### BUT WHICH PLATFORMS ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO CONTAIN UNSUITABLE CONTENT?

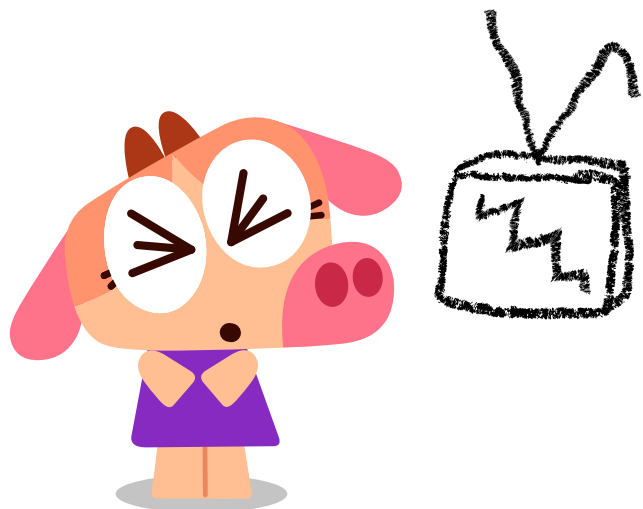
Although **platforms such as Netflix or YouTube may offer content for certain age ranges, this filter is often not specific and covers too wide a range**, usually from 0 to 12 years old, and may offer a 3 year old content suitable for a 12 year old. Moreover, not all the content found on these platforms is educational, but is mainly passive entertainment. On the other hand, other platforms that do not have a children's section, such as the general YouTube App which is not specifically for children or TikTok, may offer violent content for young children, showing aggression or even blood, which could frighten younger children.



According to an [article by TechCrunch](#) based on a study by Qustodio, TikTok is the preferred platform for children and teenagers, followed by YouTube, which has seen a 20% growth in usage, with children spending an average of one hour a day online.

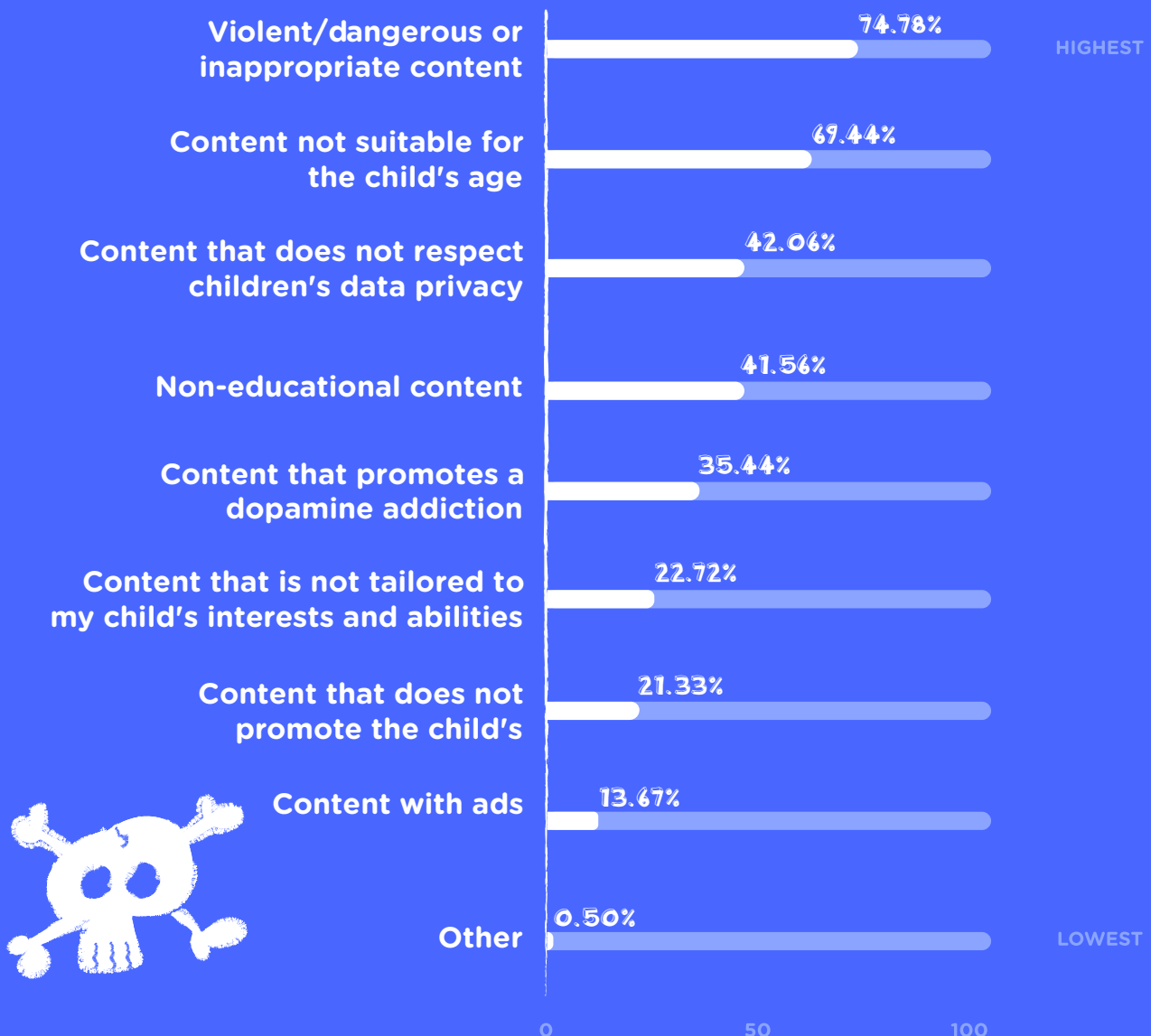
**According to experts in this study, “watching short videos on YouTube, or in longer formats on television, can affect children’s cognitive development. They learn from the content they are offered, which may be educational and healthy, but may also be unhealthy or frightening, or simply of no value at all,”** explained Dr. Michael Rich of the Boston Children’s Hospital Digital Wellness Lab.

On the other hand, Lingokids’ Director of Educational Content, Rhona Anne Dick explained that *“inappropriate content can lead to children experiencing confusion, difficulties in understanding, or even trauma. This content **does not contribute to children’s well-being and development**”*. *“Unsuitable content is content that is violent, or contains subject matter that children are not ready to assimilate or understand cognitively. It can provoke confusion, fear or anxiety,”* added Fernando Valenzuela, a member of the Lingokids Education Board.



Regina Ascencio, educator at “Formar Hoy”, stated *“If I had to choose a risk for my children, I would rather my daughter spend more time in front of a screen than exposing her to age-inappropriate content”*. This highlights that the problem is not the screen as such, but rather the use of it, being more relevant the content that is consumed than the time of use or the age at which it is introduced.

## What are the risks that most concern you about your children’s screen time?





## SECURITY AND ONLINE ADS

According to the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, children under the age of 8 do not have the ability to understand that ads are intended to be used to purchase a particular product and may cause confusion. Excessive exposure to ads can even lead to consequences such as children smoking, drinking, or poor nutrition, which can lead to obesity problems. Moreover, this is one of the main concerns of parents according to Lingokids' survey of more than 1800 parents: 57% are concerned about ads and the security of their children's personal data when using screens.



That is why it is essential for parents to opt for 100% safe platforms, which do not display advertisements and protect children's data above all. With its KidsSAFE certificate, Lingokids guarantees that it complies with these safety measures for children.



According to Regina Ascencio, an educator and neuropsychologist, the American Academy of Pediatrics is right: “some of the risks from viewing ads can be *low self-esteem, unfounded fears, nightmares, hypersexualization, or insecurity*”. “Ads aimed at young children often promote unhealthy products. Moreover, they can *affect children's critical skills, or collect personal data and track their online behavior,*” said Fernando Valenzuela, an education expert. Dr. Suzanne Barchers, Chair of the Lingokids Education Board, confirmed these risks: “Advertisements for children can be inappropriate and also *confusing for them*, as they can fall victim to emotional tricks”.

STAY AWAY SCREEN  
TIME WITH

ADS AND CONTENT  
YOU CAN'T CONTROL



CHOOSE

AD-FREE + AGE-APPROPRIATE

SCREEN TIME THAT PROMOTES  
EDUCATIONAL + SOCIAL  
SKILLS.



*"I think healthy screen time is content that doesn't contain ads to trick my children, content that's not abusive or sexual. YouTube is apparently safe, but you can't stop inappropriate ads from appearing."*

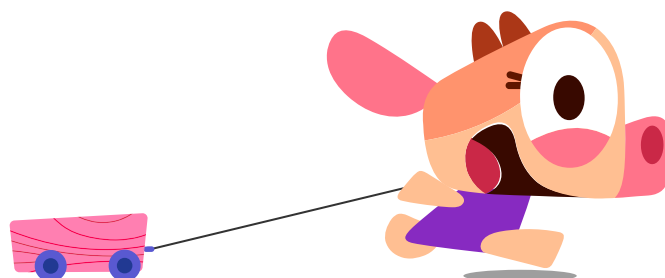
Mother of  
children aged  
2-8, USA



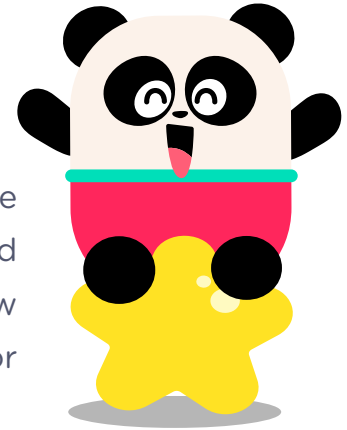
Mother with a  
4-year-old son,  
Mexico



*"My son is 4 years old and I'm worried about the contents of some cartoons. He wants to watch it because it's a cartoon, but sometimes the content is inappropriate and it's hard for him to understand that it's not for children."*



# WHAT IS QUALITY SCREEN TIME?



We have discussed the risks of non-quality screen time and the elements that cause certain platforms and content to be considered non-quality screen time. Now let's talk about quality screen time that is appropriate for children.

## USE OF INTERACTIVE SCREENS VS. PASSIVE SCREEN TIME

The consulted experts are clear: in order for screen time to be beneficial, it is important to make it interactive. However, what is passive as opposed to active and interactive and what are the implications?

According to [MyTutor](#), the UK's leading online tutoring service website, passive screen time is screen time that occurs when ***"we simply look at the screen when we are 'vegging out', watching a movie or scrolling inattentively on social media feeds."*** Instead, active screen time is part of a healthy ***"digital diet"***, and ideally should far outweigh passive screen time. 35.6% of parents surveyed by Lingokids are concerned about how passive content that does not promote cognitive development or learning may affect their child.

Furthermore, passive screen time may have other characteristics, such as the fact that it **does not promote physical exercise (a concern expressed by 48.5% of parents), or its negative effects on children’s interactions and social skills (a point raised by 39% of respondents)**. Lastly, 36% are concerned about decreased interest in other activities, such as playing outdoors or reading, due to this type of screen time.

It is therefore **essential that screen time not only promotes interactivity in the content being consumed, but also has a balance of off-screen activities**. Achieving this can in fact be a good way to encourage young children to learn, play and also to move. [Raisingchild.net](https://www.raisingchild.net) recommends that screen time should have games that encourage critical or creative thinking, awaken children’s curiosity about how things work in the real world, connect children to other people, or encourage them to produce their own content.

According to Fernando Valenzuela, from the Lingokids Board of Education: *“Excessive passive screen time can lead to reduced motivation for other physical activities, social interactions, or poor academic development. **Traditional social platforms, such as TV or YouTube, tend to offer more passive and equal experiences for all users where you just look at the screen.**”*



*“Viewing non-quality screen time promotes **passivity, empty entertainment and distraction without curiosity**. It can also displace other cognitively enriching experiences for children, such as playing with other children, imagining, or exploring nature,”* explained Dr. Michael Rich of the Boston Children’s Hospital Digital Wellness Lab.

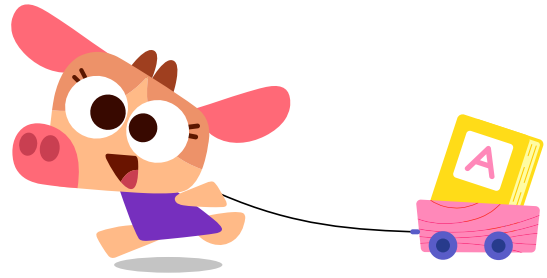
In contrast, the use of interactive screens: **“Promotes curiosity, and they can tell the story themselves or answer a series of questions,”** continued Dr. Rich. **“If children are interested in a topic they see on screens, it is very likely that this interest will continue to occur ‘offline’.”** For example, if they like science or math and play related activities, their interest is likely to continue in school,” said Rhona Anne Dick, an educator.

According to experts in this study, **interactive content is content that encourages curiosity, motivation and participation.** This participation can take place within the screen environment; either by proposing the child to interact directly - for example through problem solving and questioning - or off-screen; encouraging the child to explore the topic further, conversing with their environment or even physically putting into practice what they are seeing on screen - from dancing to music, to picking up toys or even doing a science experiment.

Learning apps, such as **Lingokids, ensure that their content catalog offers interactive content that promotes curiosity and motivation, making learning fun, dynamic and active.** Examples of this include yoga videos, songs designed to keep you dancing and moving, and games that invite you to put into practice everyday skills such as brushing your teeth, washing your hands or recycling.







## Passive

### Non-quality content

Reduces attention and fosters lack of interest. Nothing more than "watching" the content is required.

Promotes sedentary lifestyle.

Poses a risk to interactions and social skills.

Where can you find passive content? Television, Youtube, etc.

## Interactive

### Healthy content

Fosters cognitive development, motivation, and curiosity. It demands attention and response; active interaction is the only way to keep enjoying the content.

Promotes physical exercise and also activities away from screens.

Helps to connect with the real world and the surroundings.

Where can you find interactive content that promotes physical activity? Educational applications.

## EDUCATIONAL SCREEN TIME

As we have already noted above, 44% of parents surveyed by Lingokids consider the quality of the content and the time their children spend in front of screens to be more relevant than the age of the child. In addition, **in their ranking of priorities for what they consider to be beneficial screen use for their children, educational use comes first**, followed by other priorities such as age-appropriateness, limits, and interactivity.

On the other hand, the platforms that parents feel most comfortable using for their children are educational, with TikTok and YouTube occupying the last places. **63.3% of their children engage in educational activities, while 67.2% view educational content.**



All of this shows how concerned parents are about ensuring screen time that helps children continue to learn and build knowledge.

### **But what is considered educational screen time and what are the benefits of it?**

Educational content is that which promotes the learning of traditional educational subjects such as language or mathematics, and which also helps to develop social-emotional skills such as empathy, care for the environment or critical thinking. And yes, according to experts, this content not only exists, but it is also beneficial and effective.

Sources such as *Canadian Pediatric Society* suggest that this kind of content **improves not only cognitive development, but also the child's social and emotional well-being**. They also add that, in addition, viewing age-appropriate and educational content with an adult can create very positive screen experiences.

Rhona Anne Dick, Director of Educational Content at Lingokids, agreed: *"Learning through screens has significant benefits for children, **especially those who suffer from anxiety, don't react well to traditional teaching aids, fear making mistakes or being laughed at by their peers**. Furthermore, learning apps like Lingokids are perfect for children to **personalize their own learning process** and, according to our findings, these apps motivate children to learn more."*

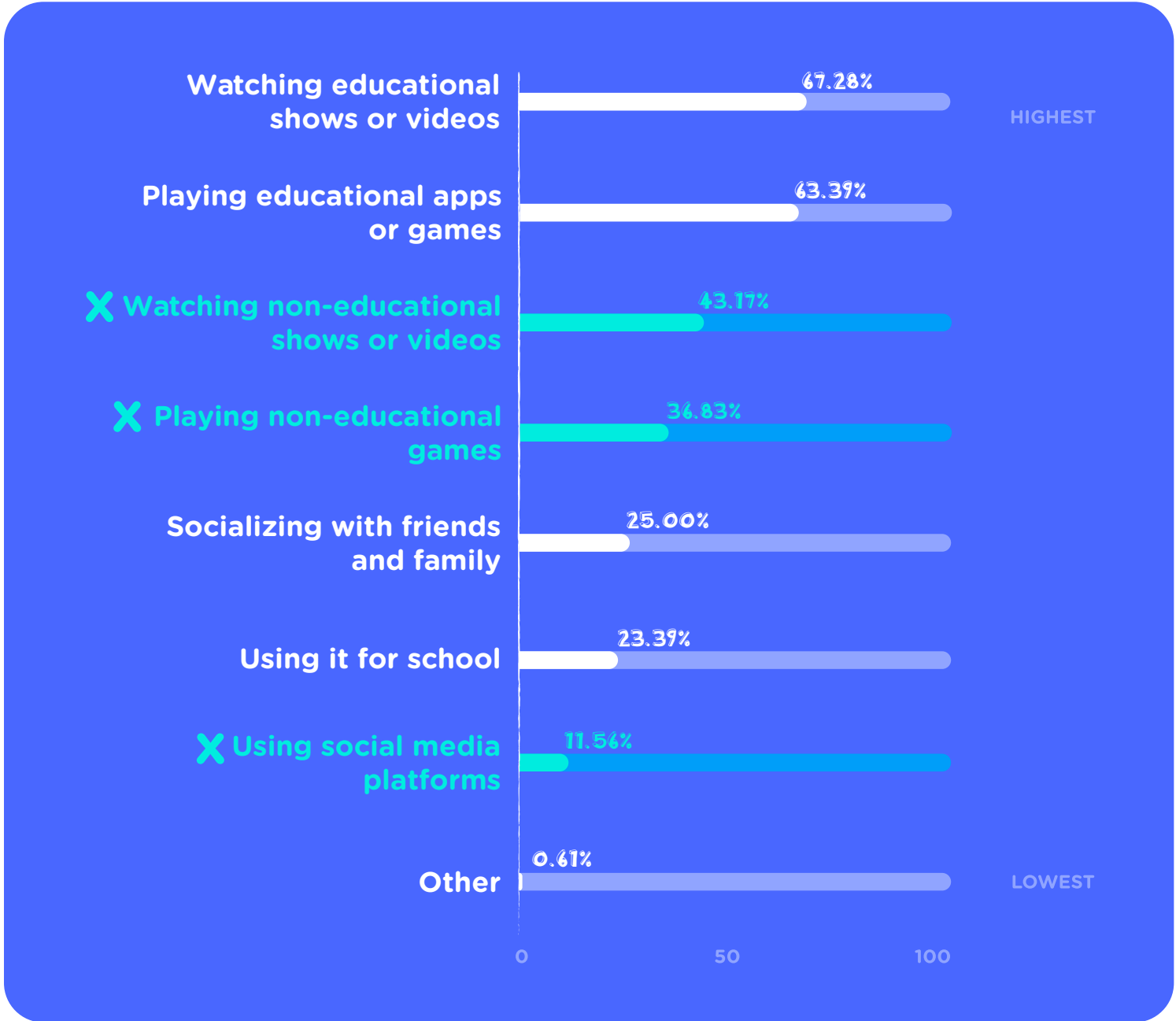
Fernando Valenzuela, Lingokids' advisor, added that *"these resources can improve their knowledge and cognitive skills, as well as their ability to solve problems or think critically."*

Although platforms such as Netflix or YouTube may offer some educational content, it is often not as specialized in learning and is less adapted to the child's age. Therefore, **educational apps best meet this objective of providing children with educational content through screens**.

According to one Mexican mother of three surveyed, *"quality screen time is when my child uses educational apps or videos where he learns new skills and develops these existing skills."*



# WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DOES YOUR CHILD ENGAGE IN DURING SCREEN TIME?



## WHAT DO YOU THINK COUNTS AS QUALITY, HEALTHY SCREEN TIME?

1 The content is educational

2 The content adapts to their age

3 It has time limits

4 It has content that encourages my child to move (e.g., dance, yoga, stretching)

5 It promotes interactive engagement

6 It promotes both academic and social skills

7 It teaches healthy life habits

8 It's ad free

Say goodbye to  
**ZOMBIE  
SCREEN TIME**

Avoid addictive,  
high dopamine  
screen time with

**NO EDUCATIONAL VALUE.**



Say hello to  
**FUN, EDUCATIONAL  
SCREEN TIME**

Invest in interactive,  
educational screen  
time that

**SPARKS COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT  
IMAGINATION + CURIOSITY.**



# MEET THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS

Screens shouldn't be completely avoided—it's how we learn, communicate, and connect. The key is guiding kids how to use it properly.



Dr. Michael Rich

Pediatrician, Child Health Researcher,  
Professor at Harvard Medical School,  
Founder of The Wellness Lab



Learning apps are best for quality screen time, they're designed for kids with friendlier, non-addictive stimuli, and have a continuous learning intention.

Regina Ascensio

Pedagogist, Neuropsychologist,  
Owner of "Formar Hoy"

# CONCLUSIONS

It is undeniable that one of parents' main concerns nowadays is their children's exposure to screens. However, are screens a concern or is it actually the content we should focus on?

According to experts, screens can't be avoided and their correct use can have huge benefits. There are therefore some keys to ensure that children's screen time is truly beneficial and quality. These keys are indicated below:

**That the platforms are educational.**

**That the content is age-appropriate.**

**That they use active and interactive content, not passive content.**

**That the content is safe and there are no ads.**

**That they establish time limits and times for using screens.**

These tips can ensure that our children use screen time to their advantage, having fun while acquiring academic and social-emotional skills.

In this respect, both parents and experts agreed that the platforms that best ensure this quality, interactive and educational screen time are educational apps. Lingokids is a great example of how safe, educational and quality screen time is possible as it complies with the recommendations of experts in education and children's health.



PARENTS AGREE:

# SCREENS AREN'T THE ENEMY.

Non-quality, mindless, “zombie content” is.

That’s why Lingokids is on a mission to provide a fun, educational and interactive alternative that kids love and parents feel good about.

Zombie  
Mode

OFF ON

Playlearning™  
Mode





1,800 parents of kids 2-8 were asked:

# WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST SCREEN TIME WORRY?

Here's what they said and how Lingokids is the solution:

## PARENTS' BIGGEST WORRIES

70%



of parents are worried about screen time that doesn't promote cognitive development.

71%



of parents are concerned about content that's not age appropriate.

57%



of parents are worried about unsafe ads and data privacy.

48%



of parents are concerned about screen time that leads to a sedentary lifestyle.

## PLAYLEARNING™ WITH LINGOKIDS

Fun learning that sparks critical thinking, imagination + curiosity.



Adapts to your kids as they grow with non-violent, age-specific learning.



Safe, no ads, protects your kid's data to encourage autonomous play.



Gets kids moving with a mix of screen time that highlights physical activity + screen-free fun.



## WHY IS LINGOKIDS THE SOLUTION TO QUALITY SCREEN TIME?

We have fun, educational, and interactive learning designed for kids 2-8.

### 1,200 interactive learning activities

get kids thinking and moving—from games and puzzles to dance choreography and yoga classes.



### Educator-back modern curriculum

that covers academic and life skills—from math to mindfulness and from reading to robots. Each piece of content is centered around an educational objective

### Safe and controlled experience

with no ads, age-appropriate content, and screen time features.





“Lingokids is designed and adapted for kids 2 to 8 years old. It’s completely safe with no ads and parents can set time limits. The best part is all the activities, games, songs, and videos. They are fun and educational, making screen time productive and beneficial for kids.”

## Regina Ascensio

Pedagogist, Neuropsychologist,  
Owner of “Formar Hoy”



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