Not all screen time is created equal

Use this chart to identify which types of screen use can best support your kiddos' developmental needs. For instance, if they struggle with social anxiety, support them in connecting with other kids and/or invite them into more collaborative activities. Some parents create time limits for different types (e.g. 30 min of passive scrolling, vs 1 hour of creative).

Type of Screen Use	What It Looks Like	Developmental Value	Examples
Creative	Making something new using digital tools	Builds agency, imagination, and problem solving	Coding, digital art, music production, video editing, game design
Learning	Structured exploration or skill development	Builds knowledge, curiosity, and competence	Educational videos, research, online courses, tutorials
Communication	Connecting with others in meaningful ways	Builds belonging and social skills	Texting friends, FaceTime with family, collaborative gaming
Collaborative	Working with others toward a shared goal	Builds teamwork, planning, leadership	Multiplayer games with strategy, shared creative projects
Purpose-Driven	Using tech to organize, create, or contribute	Builds responsibility and purpose	Planning events, advocacy, volunteering, creating content
Entertainment	Consuming media for relaxation or enjoyment	Neutral — can support rest and culture when balanced	Watching shows, sports, movies
Passive Scrolling	Endless algorithm-driven content consumption	Often weak on developmental benefits	TikTok scrolling, autoplay YouTube shorts, "brain rot"

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