Fun ways to support reading on screens
A National Literacy Trust membership resource

Why use screens to support reading?
We all know that we need to keep an eye on our children’s (and our own!) screen time - especially before bedtime. However, many children enjoy short, supervised opportunities to engage with fun apps on tablets and smartphones during the day. Here are some suggested ways to encourage children of all ages to have fun and build their reading skills while using touchscreens.

Age

2+

CBeebies Storytime is a high-quality, free app. It’s packed with free interactive story books featuring well-known characters such as Charlie and Lola.
Available on: Amazon, Android or Apple.

3+

Teach Your Monster to Read encourages children to match letters and sounds by helping their own little monster character start to read. Free online, or £4.99 as an app on Amazon, Android or Apple.

4+

The BookTrust website features a range of great storybooks for children and families to enjoy for free. Some also include signing, audio and/or different languages. Visit: https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/

5+

The MeBooks app offers hundreds of downloadable ebooks from top-quality authors. Titles are readable as books but also come with fun features such as music, sound effects and a ‘record it yourself’ option. Available on Amazon, Android or Apple.

6+

The Libby and Borrow Box apps are linked to public libraries and have a great range of books and audiobooks to borrow for free - all you need is your library card number! (If you can’t get ebooks from your local library, look for free books on the Kindle or iBooks apps.)
Choosing an app for your child – the FEED test
There are lots of apps that call themselves ‘educational’ but you’ll still want to reassure yourself that they are right for your child. The FEED check may help.

Fun – Will your child enjoy the app? Will it keep their attention?

Educational – Is there a clear educational aim? Do you know what your child will learn? Will it keep them learning and allow them to progress?

Engaging – Will it help your child if they get stuck and give them feedback, letting them know they’ve got challenges right?

Design – Is it attractive and easy to use? Is it inclusive and avoid gender and racial stereotypes? Can an adult change the settings? Is it safe and are adverts protected behind a parental gate?

Find more information and advice on supporting your child’s learning through apps and screen time:

- [hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](http://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)
- [Early years apps parent guidance](http://earlyyearsapps.parentguidance.org.uk)
- [Guidance from the UK Chief Medical Officer on screen time based activities](http://www.screenwise.gov.uk)

Or visit:

- [Small Talk](https://www.nlt.org.uk/small-talk) – ideas and activities from the National Literacy Trust
- [I CAN](https://ican.org.uk) – for more information about children’s communication
- [A Better Start](http://www.abetterstart.org.uk) – for more information about building young brains
- [Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](https://www.rcslt.org) can provide support if you’re worried about your child’s speech and language development.