

Calling all preschool families!

Join our *Digital Play*
Family Research Hub



- Do you have a 2-7-year-old child or grandchild?
- Would you like to find out more about apps to support children's learning - and how families can use apps together?
- Are you interested in being involved in the development of new apps - or in research about children and families using technology?

Why join the *Digital Play* Family Research Hub?

As a member you will receive **research news** on digital technology, families and child learning via our newsletter.

We are also looking for families to **take part in our innovative research** - for example to help us test and develop new educational apps. We'll send out a research call to Hub families every now and again but taking part will always be completely voluntary; you are very welcome to join for the newsletters and updates alone.

Sign up [here](#) to join the Hub.

See below for our first opportunity to get involved! We're looking for parents and grandparents to help us develop an app for families to use together.....

Who are we?

We are the LiFT (Learning for Families through Technology) project team at Oxford University. We research a range of topics relating to apps and young children, including vocabulary development, creativity and family co-play.

[Find out more here](#)

Call for families to try out a new drawing app!

We are **developing a new creative app** for adults and children to use together and would love **families with 3-5-year-olds** to be involved in the design and development. We are looking for families to try out the first version of the app when it's ready and tell us what you think! This would happen in **May to July 2023** at a time that works for you.

If you join the Hub (details above) you will receive an invitation to take part. You can ignore this if it's not for you! But if you would like to take part, we will send you the app to download and play with your child at home - along with a short feedback survey.

You will be helping us to improve app design for families around the world - and to develop an app which we will use for research later in the year.

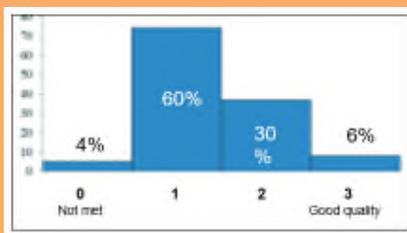
If you have questions before signing up, please [get in touch](#).

Many apps claim to be 'educational'...but are they?

Many apps are fun and engaging for children. But if we also want children to *learn* through their digital play then how do apps measure up?

A recent review assessed the learning potential of the 100 most downloaded 'educational' apps for children on the App Store and Google Play. It found that most were not well designed to support child learning.

Only **6%** received the highest score of 3 for '**supporting meaningful learning**' (see graph). Most (87%) offered little support for **social interaction** - for example features which allow or encourage parents or other children to play along, or chances to interact with digital characters.



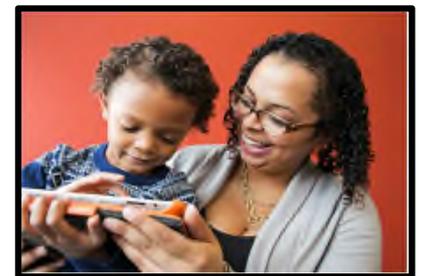
Luckily, there is lots of good advice available for choosing good quality apps.....

Rating for 'supports meaningful learning'
Source: Meyer and colleagues (2021)

The **National Literacy Trust** have lots of tips for using technology and choosing apps for children. They also have information on a huge range of apps that have been reviewed by independent experts.

Click [here](#) for details.

Click [here](#) for an article featuring one of our team on 'how to raise happier kids in a digital age'.



Did you know.....that children get more out of apps when they use them together with an adult?

We have been looking at the research on what works best for adults and children using apps together. We recommend looking for apps that...

* Let you go at your pace...

- ...leave time for talk
- ...have simple controls
- ...are not too 'busy'

* Encourage conversation & real-world activities

- Are there interesting things to talk about?
- Can you recreate the game offline?

* Support collaboration

- Opportunities to play together
- Ideas for the adult
- Structure for different roles

* Are interesting for your child... ...but also for you!

- You will play for longer if the app isn't driving you mad!

* Are right for your family

- Does it fit into your routines and the kinds of things you already do?

Can I join the Hub if I'm not a parent?

Yes! Anyone interested in keeping up to date with research on this exciting topic is welcome to join.

What would YOU like to see in future newsletters?

If you have ideas for topics you'd like to see featured, please [get in touch!](#)