

# Conversation Is Still the Only Way to Understand Each Other

*Chihiro Maeba*

## BEFORE YOU READ:

1. How do you talk to your children about how they use their phones?
2. What is *fake news*? Share an example of fake news. How did you know it was fake?
3. Look at the photos of the author with her three children. What do you notice?

## Phones Can Be Helpful

My daughters are 12 years old and 9 years old. They both have old smart phones. They only work if they have Wi-Fi. Therefore, they use their phones only at home. I installed an app called Line on both phones. With this app, they contact certain people. We are happy that they can easily communicate with my parents living in my home country, Japan.

They also use the phones to study English. I installed an educational app called Duolingo that helps them learn English grammar without teachers. My second daughter's English skills have improved after using this app.

## Children Need to Learn How to Use Them

Smart phones can also be a problem. Children are interested in watching videos on YouTube. Sometimes, videos give good information and ideas. However, sometimes these videos give bad ideas and *fake news*. I suppose parents can no longer stop children from watching harmful videos. Therefore, we have to teach children how to handle the information they get.

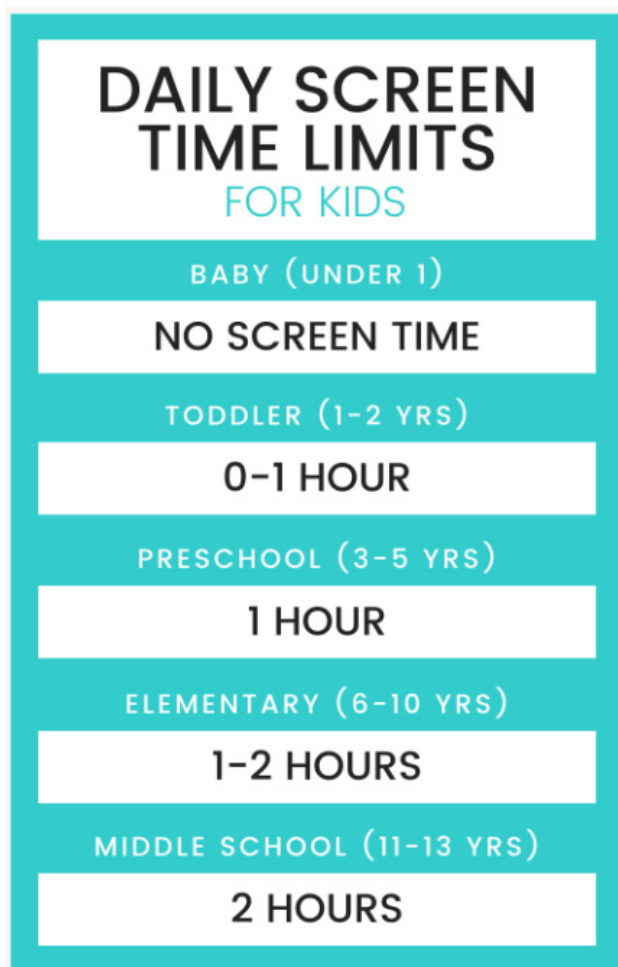
It is the same for adults. We get a lot of information from our digital tools, and we have to



decide what is worth reading. Children also need to learn how to choose the information they read and the videos they watch.

### Keep Talking to Your Children

How do we choose? How do we help our children choose? We need to have more opportunities to discuss these questions with our children. There is so much news and information on the internet. Adults need to take an interest in world happenings, so we can be a better judge of whether the news is true or fake. And we should keep talking to our children about how to use their digital tools. Conversation is still the only way we can understand each other.



Source: <https://bringwiton.com/how-to-limit-screen-time/>



#### AFTER YOU READ:

1. What is the author's main point? How do you know? Point to evidence in the text that backs up your opinion about what the main point is.
2. When you try to have a hard conversation with your kids or with anyone, what makes it go well? What makes it go badly?
3. Study the chart on the left. What do you think of the recommendations for screen time for children? What limits do you use for your children?
4. See Issue 62 for more articles by adult learners about how they identify and deal with fake news.

*Chihiro Maeba is a student at the Education Exchange in Peace Dale, Rhode Island. She came to the U.S. in 2022 for her husband's job. She enjoys learning (with her three children) not only English but also about U.S. culture.*