

Parenting Tips

for Teaching Good Screen Time Habits

Kids love to learn and play on their devices. But when they spend lots of time in front of screens, they have less time for other healthy activities. We can help kids learn good screen time habits!

Consider using the following tips:



Limit Screen Time!

- Help kids understand that limiting screens is good for their health, just like eating well or brushing their teeth.
- Create “Screen Free Zones” in the home, such as “no screens at the dinner table” and “no screens in the bedrooms at bedtime”.
- Create “Screen Free Times” during the day. For example, “no screens at least one hour before bedtime” or “no unnecessary screens during homework time”.
- Delay screen time until chores, homework or dinner is done.
- Break up screen time. Regularly suggest everyone turn off their screens and do another activity instead, preferably outside exploring nature.

Consider following the screen time guidelines:

Age	Recommended hours of screen time
Under 2 years	None
2-4 years	Less than 1 hour a day
5-17 years	No more than 2 hours of recreational screen time a day



Make Time for Active Outdoor Play!

- Replace screen-time with active play time. Encourage kids to play outside, where they will naturally move more and play for a longer period of time.
- Get kids involved with gardening, meal planning, grocery shopping and cooking; these are good activities to replace screen time while teaching kids about food.
- Encourage kids to think about the fun things they could be doing instead of using screens: playing, dancing, exploring, drawing, reading, etc. This helps to motivate them to limit their screen time.



Teach Your Kids

- Set a good example. Think about your own screen use, and the messages this sends to kids. Follow the same screen rules as kids, so that they see that managing screen time is important for everyone!
- Avoid using screens to soothe or distract kids, as much as possible, especially with young kids. If this is a habit, kids will find it harder to calm themselves without a screen. If you know you and your child will have to wait, for example, at the doctor’s office, bring a book or toy instead of handing over your device to distract your child.
- Use screens together as a family. Co-viewing media with your kids is a good opportunity to talk about difficult content and family values.
- Enjoy meals together, free from screens! Kids choose to eat healthier foods when they eat with others and when they are involved in planning and cooking meals and snacks. Getting kids in the kitchen also allows them to learn about different foods and traditions.
- Save bedrooms for sleep. Regular uninterrupted sleep is important for kids to grow and be healthy. Blue light from screens tricks the brain into thinking it is daytime, which makes it hard to sleep. Turn screens off one hour before bed and keep bedrooms screen free.

For more information
call 1-800-660-5853
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