



SCREEN TIME

Make Screen Time a Privilege

Moving your children away from screen time is going to take effort. Prepare yourself for pushback and severe resistance.

What are the impacts of screen time?

- Changes in brain development: reduced attention, promotes instant gratification, and more easily bored.
- Decrease in physical energy, motivation and fitness levels.
- Increase in depression: unhealthy social comparisons through 'likes' and online pictures.
- Loss of sleep.
- Delays in language development.

Why is it sooo difficult to get kids off of screen time?

- Children see us use devices way too often.
- All of us — young and old — are addicted to screens. We get hits of dopamine or the feel-good chemical from our screens. How long does it take you to respond to a notification once you hear the ping? How quickly do you check social media when you first wake up in the morning?
- The intense sounds and rapid movements are much more immersing than the real world. Games have rewards and levels, making them difficult to disengage from.
- No one likes to transition from one activity to another on any occasion. Children don't have the ability to regulate their emotions when shifting off their devices. Don't try to end screen time when in the middle of a game or video — wait until there is a natural end or break.

How can parents help children lessen their screen time with as little pain as possible?

- We can find answers from addiction research:
 - Have a supportive, caring person or family member to listen;
 - Stay away from temptation; and

- Replace the behaviour.
- Have a family discussion about all of your screen time usages and agree to make changes.
- Introduce the “digital break.” For example, stay off screens on a Sunday afternoon, or limit the times you look at social media during a day — once in the morning, afternoon and evening for an hour each?
- Put devices out of sight to lessen the temptation.
- No screen zones: dinner time or family room.
- Devices can be kept in the parent’s room overnight.
- A device station can be set up in a separate location in house: basement, closet.
- Make screen time a predictable and scheduled part of your children’s week. When screen times are planned there are less outbreaks when it is over.
- Involve everyone in determining when warnings happen. Let them set a timer. Use 10- or 5-minute warnings, and ask your children what they can realistically complete in that time frame. Using warnings as last resort on the fly, such as a countdown, can lead to an argument.
- Front load: remind your children of time limit rules before they get on their screens.
- Once you’ve set a limit on how much screen time is allowed, don’t change it. You need to follow through, otherwise children (and you) will continue to push the limits knowing there is flexibility. Consistency and follow through are extremely important. Allow 30–45 minutes per session.
- Do something enjoyable, such as a snack, after screen time is over to make transition easier.
- If your child is resistant, stay calm and walk away. When calmer remove the device. When giving electronics back, explain that the return is only on a “trial basis” to see if your child is ready to handle the device again.
- Provide alternative activities, including walking, crafting, drawing, playing musical instruments, cooking, visiting relatives, playing sports.
- It can also be helpful to have a reward chart where children get stickers for handing over the device.

Setting parental control on your child's device

Go to **Settings**

Choose **Screen Time**

Tap **App Limit** — you can choose how long a child can spend on each social media or game app

Tap **Add Limit** — then choose what areas: social, games, etc.

Go to **Settings**

Choose **Content and Privacy Restrictions** and create a password

Tap **Content Restrictions**

Tap **Web Content**

- I. Tap **Limit Adult Websites** or **Allowed Websites only** — you can add websites to the list of allowed websites; or
- II. Tap **Itunes & App Stores Purchases**

Enable Ask to Buy:

On your Iphone, Open **Settings**, select **your name** at top, tap **Family Sharing**

Resources

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/parenting/big-kid/child-screen-addiction.html>

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/25-screen-free-activities-wean-kids-their-screens>

<https://www.melbournechildpsychology.com.au/blog/does-your-child-have-a-technology-addiction/>

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/5-strategies-for-getting-kids-off-devices>

<https://getparentinghelpnow.com/10-fun-ways-to-get-your-kids-off-electronics-this-summer/>