

Making the Most of Screen Time

Overview

We know that limited screen time is best, but we also know that in a world with so many advancements in technology – screens are often a part of most people’s lives. Creating space for screen time means making the most of screen time – for learning, for mindfulness and movement, for connection and sometimes just play. Find ways to use screen time for good and think outside of the box to help children learn, move, think and connect with the click of a button.



Take Action

Screen Time for Learning

Access to online education tools have become an incredible resource for at-home and on-the-go learning. Not only do these tools provide children with opportunities to explore a wide range of subjects, they also support parents in developing confidence in the role they play in supporting the Whole Child. Utilize the wide range of online resources and use screen time for health and happiness to help children explore the world.

- **Plan a classroom or family research fair.** Fill scrap pieces of paper with topics including ecosystems, famous artists or athletes, animals or places in the world and invite everyone to pick a topic out of a hat. Use screen time to dig in deeper and complete their own research project. Then draw, print or create a poster or use PowerPoint to make a digital presentation and share

with one another the things you learned, the things that surprised you and start a dialogue as a group or in pairs.

- **Explore a new subject.** Discover something new in science with [Science with a Side of Awesome - Crash Course Kids YouTube](#) or nature and history with [Kids National Geographic](#)
- **Explore your heritage.** Learn something new about your family's history, a favorite past time or culinary practice.

Screen Time for Mindfulness

Technology has opened a world of opportunity for children and adults to practice mindfulness through resources like guided meditations, virtual yoga classes, and music streaming. Place the intention of mindfulness at the root of your screen time by listening to your favorite song and thinking about the meaning of the lyrics or practicing virtual yoga or meditation. Whatever the screen time activity may be, if you place the intention to be mindful and reflective behind the activity, you can help children develop skills in self-reflection, self-awareness, and begin to connect the mind and body.

- **Create a digital journal.** [Journaling is one of many ways to practice mindfulness.](#) Utilize online journaling apps to create a digital space where they can document their feelings, explore ideas and doodle.
- **Get bendy.** Use screen time to [practice yoga](#) and mindfulness in the classroom, at home or on the go with online videos and activities. When watching television, take advantage of the commercial breaks to stretch out those muscles or reset the mind.

Screen Time for Movement

Do you have a favorite type of movement? Whether you are a dancer, walker, yogi, or other type of mover and groover there are many ways to get moving with screen time. Online videos and tutorials for movement provide children with opportunities to

find their favorite ways to move their bodies. Body movement is important because it gets our blood flowing and our minds working, therefore boosting our moods and abilities to cope with difficult situations.

- **Get moving while watching television or a movie.** Make a list of movements and cues and turn screen time an active game. Character went outside? Run in place for 30 seconds. It changed from day to night? Do 10 jumping jacks. Similarly, turn commercial breaks into a family fitness challenge to see who can complete the most frog jumps or sit-ups.
- **Shake out the wiggles.** Get movin' with Go Noodle dance videos: [Footloose](#), [A-Moose-Ta-Cha](#), [High Velocity](#) or visit Hip Hop Public Health's resource library and try [28 H.Y.P.E. The Breaks](#) and [Y.P.E Breaking It Down](#) 2, 6 and 10 Minute Videos for Kids.

Screen Time for Connection

Social interaction and communication are crucial to maintaining balanced social-emotional well-being. Luckily, we live in a world where we can communicate with a friend or family member just by the touch of a button. Use screen time to schedule calls or virtual hangouts with family members and friends.

- **Plan virtual play dates or hangouts.** Invite a friend or group to do a craft together, play a game, just to sit and chat or play a game of freeze dance to your favorite tunes. Invite children to bring their favorite book and host a virtual story time or take turns adding more twists and turns to a campfire style story made up together. Looking for inspiration, use this [story starter](#) generator from Scholastic.
- **Come together at the table.** Host a virtual snack break with friends or put your skills to the test with some [food art](#) – who can make the silliest fruit face or the next edible masterpiece?

Screen Time for Play

At the end of the day, sometimes a little play time is all that is needed and if it's with a screen - that's okay. [Set boundaries to limit screen time](#) and invite children to be a part of the process. Make a schedule to hang on the refrigerator with screen time blocked for a small period of time or create your own "check out" system. Before hopping behind a screen, have children check out small devices or a "pass" to use larger ones and set a timer. Be clear on the rules that surround screen time to help kids feel empowered to take ownership on making responsible choices.

Social Emotional Health Highlights

Activities such as these help children explore...

Self-Awareness and Responsible Decision Making: Helping children better understand healthy ways to use screen time increases their capacity to make constructive choices. Screen time engages many of the senses and can influence how we feel - sometimes negatively. Using screen time for constructive activities and setting boundaries helps children recognize when they might need to take a break or move on to something else - whether it's because of frustration in a game or noticing sedentary patterns. Creating a healthier relationship with screen time invites children to see limiting screen time as a healthy choice and not a restriction.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

[Physical Activity: Get Kids Active with](#)

[Free Brain Boost Videos \(Active Schools\)](#)

[Explore Social Emotional Learning](#)

[through Movement: A Win-Win \(Active Schools\)](#)

[Go Noodle Movement Library.\(Go Noodle\)](#)

[Help Your Kids Reduce Screen Time.\(We Can - NIH\)](#)

[Screen Time Chart.\(We Can - NIH\)](#)

[Help Your Kids Reduce Screen Time and Screen Time Chart - Spanish.\(We Can - NIH\)](#)

[Parents Guide to Streaming Services \(Soda\)](#)

Limit Screen Time

Limit daily screen time for kids and instead get them up, moving and spending quality time with family and friends!

Active Learning Opportunities

Incorporate physical activity before, during, and after the school day, as well as into daily lesson plans.

Stepping Into the Wild: Creative Outdoor Learning

Creating an outdoor classroom is a fun and imaginative way to engage students in learning about nature and the world around us.

Backyard Fitness Circuit Course

Enjoy the outdoors and get your heart pumping with a Backyard Fitness Circuit Course. Fitness circuit courses are a fun and interactive way for anyone to be physically active.

