

PaWS' Parent Guide



Reducing your child's screen time

Screen time is part of everyday life for children. They use screen for entertainment, communication, research as well as accessing home learning tasks set by the school.

Ensuring a healthy balance is important however as too much screen time can lead to lead to obesity, sleep problems, chronic neck and back problems, depression and anxiety.



Have you tried the following?

Establish clear expectations with your child. If you know that your child is spending too much time behind a screen, resetting the expectations is important so that your child understands the importance of cutting back. Have this conversation with your child when things are calm and at a time when they are away from a screen. Share your concerns and tell your child that you are going to try something different starting tomorrow with their amount of screen time to get the balance right for everyone. Then explain the routines that you are putting in place.

Create house rules together. Come together and create screen-time rules as a family. You might explain that the rules will be subject to negotiation as your children get older. Review the rules to check what's working and what's not.

Model healthy electronic use. Parents are role models for their children. Be alert of the amount of time you spend in front of a screen yourself. Keeping the TV on in the background or scrolling through your phone when you have a spare minute may not be modelling the behaviour you hope to see in your children.

Set aside time to unplug. Choose a time for your whole family to unplug from the phone, TV and computer. When you all agree to put down your devices, it gives your family the chance to spend quality time together.

Use parental controls. There are tools you can use to filter or block unwanted content. You can even set daily screen time limits that can lock your children out of apps after they have reached a set amount of time.

Encourage other activities. It is easy for children to become reliant on electronics for entertainment. Instead, encourage them to get involved in activities that don't require a screen like playing outside, reading a book or playing a board game.



Keep bedrooms screen-free. You may want to consider making it a rule that electronic devices are not allowed in the bedroom. This also includes tablets and other handheld devices that your children may be tempted to use at night, which could interfere with their sleep.

Start early. Research suggests that setting clear boundaries with younger children makes it easier to manage screen time as they get older. The easiest way to limit screen time is just to deny your children unsupervised access. For younger children it is straight forward to set limits, delay giving them their own devices, and decide when they are just too young for certain apps and games.

Discuss your concerns with the school. If the suggestions above have not been successful and concerns are ongoing, please contact your child's class teacher. They are likely to talk to your child about risks associated with too much screen time. They might support you in creating a screen time contract, introduce rewards or offer additional praise to provide you with further support.



Find out more:

Parent Zone:

<https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/morearticles/screen-time-everything-you-need-to-know>

Tech Advisor:

<https://www.techadvisor.com/article/726637/how-much-screen-time-for-kids.html>

PaWS' online safety guidance and policy:

<https://pevenseyschool.org.uk/safeguarding/online-safety/>

<https://pevenseyschool.org.uk/statutory-info/policies/>