



ACADÉMIE
ST-LAURENT
ACADEMY

MANAGING SCREEN TIME - TIPS AND RESOURCES

Make Screen Time a Privilege not a Reward:

Screen time should be a privilege and not a right/reward. Once you've set a limit on how much screen time is allowed per day, don't allow kids to earn extra time as a reward. Instead, stick to the daily limit and offer other free or low-cost rewards.

Model Healthy Electronic Use

It's important to role model healthy electronics use for your children. So before you binge-watch your favorite Netflix series, remember to set a good example. Keeping the TV on for background noise all the time or scrolling through your phone any time you have a spare minute teaches your child bad habits.

Create "Technology-Free Zones"

Establish zones in your house where you just don't allow electronics, like smartphones and laptops. For example, the dining room can be a great technology-free zone that is reserved for meals and family conversations. The child's bedroom is also a place where tech should be restricted.

Don't Allow Screen Media in Your Child's Bedroom

It's impossible to monitor a child's screen media use if it's allowed in the bedroom. Don't allow your child to have a TV, video game system or computer in his room. This includes hand-held devices that many children use late at night, which can interfere with their sleep.

Making the Rules

It's important to involve all family members when you're making family rules about screen use. Your rules should be flexible enough to cover school days, weekends and holidays. The rules also need to take into account your child's changing needs and interests as he grows.

It's a good idea to revisit the rules every few months and whenever you introduce a new device into your home. This helps you ensure the rules are still meeting everyone's needs.

Breaking the rules

Sometimes your child might break the rules you've agreed on. For example, your child might play on the tablet without asking first. You can plan some consequences for these situations. For example, the consequence for using the tablet without asking might be no tablet for a day.

Routines and screen time

Routines help children know what to do, when and how often. This means routines can help you build screen time into your family life in a way that suits you.

For example, if you want to put time limits on screen time, you can make this part of a routine. You might decide your child can watch TV or use her tablet, but only between 5 and 6 pm. Or your routine might include just one program before dinner, or whatever suits your family.

Routines can also help you minimise conflict about screen use. For example, if you don't want your child to use screens in the car, you might have a car routine that involves listening to music or playing 'I spy' before your child reads a book.

Screen time transitions

Your child might find it hard to stop watching TV or playing on his tablet, especially if he's having a good time. Planning transitions from screen time to other activities can make things easier.

Here are some tips:

- Set your child's expectations about a screen time session before the session starts. You could say, 'You can watch one program', or 'You can watch until it's bath time'.
- Choose your timing. If you can, get your child to stop using digital media at a natural break. For example, try to plan bath time for when your child has finished a level in a game, or at the end of a TV program.
- Give your child a warning when it's almost time to stop. For example, 'Sam, it's time to switch the TV off at the end of the program', or 'Sam, you have five more minutes on the tablet'.

- Give your child time to save what she’s doing. You could offer to help – for example, you might say, ‘Ali, it’s time to stop on the computer now. Do you want me to help you save what you’re doing?’

Choices about screen use

If your child has choices about his screen use as well as input into your family’s screen time rules, he’s more likely to cooperate with the rules and limits.

Also, making choices from a range of healthy and high-quality options helps your child learn how to manage screen time independently in the future.

You could offer your child choices about:

- what to watch or do – for example, ‘Do you want to watch *Play School* or *Sesame Street* today?’ or ‘Do you want to work on your animation or play your puzzle app?’
- when to use screens – for example, ‘Do you want to have your screen time after school or after dinner today?’
- how to break up screen time – for example, ‘Do you want to use a timer, or take a break when you finish the level?’ or ‘Are you going to jog on the spot or do star jumps when you finish the level?’

One of the keys is encouraging your child to make choices about screen use based on quality. To do this you can:

- talk with your child about good-quality content
- ask your child whether she thinks she’s making good choices.

Name of Resource	About	link
Earning Screen time chart	An example of a simple chart outlining the activities/jobs/chores that the child has to do to earn screen time.	https://cdn.loveandmarriageblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Screen-Time-Checklist.pdf
Printable screen time chore cards	Earn screen time by helping around the house	https://yourmodernfamilyshop.com/chores

Countdown to screen time	The child works their way through a series of tasks (determined by the parent) in order to earn their screen time.	http://buna.digitalfuturesconsortium.org/screen-time-chore-chart/screen-time-countdown-charts-for-kids-kids-schedule-kids.html
Popsicle stick tasks to earn screen time	Using popsicle sticks with tasks on them for children to earn screen time.	http://www.mommasgonecity.com/2014/10/dancing-with-technology-and-screen-time-2/