

# Tips for Setting Screen Time Boundaries with Children

## Part 1: Set the Limit

**Begin with kindness.** Empathize with the fact that your child may rely on unstructured screen time for relaxation and fun. You might say, "I understand that you need time to relax."

**Start small.** If your child is spending a lot of time on screens each day, it is not realistic to drastically reduce their screen time all at once. Try decreasing their screen time slowly over time. You might try decreasing it by 10 minutes more each week until you reach the recommended amount for their age.

**Schedule screens.** Try to agree upon a regular time for screen use. For example, maybe your child likes using electronics after daycare or school to decompress, which also allows you to cook dinner with fewer interruptions.

**Time it right.** Start new screen time limits at natural transition points in the child's life, such as the start of a fresh school year or the beginning of the week. This will make it easier for them to adapt.

**Activity menu.** Make a list together of activities they could do instead of using electronics! This might help children see the fun waiting for them in the real world.

## Part 2: Keep the Limit

**Avoid drama.** It is normal for children to try to push limits. Try not to engage in arguments about screen time rules.

**Use empathy.** You can maintain your limits while honoring your child's feelings. Saying something like, "I see that this new rule makes you feel sad/angry/upset" might help your child feel more understood.

**Use a little extra screen time as a reward.** Clearly communicate with your child what behaviors could earn them 10 extra minutes of unstructured screen time. For example, if they do their chores without prompting or eat dinner without complaining, they might earn extra time.

## Suggested Screen Time Limits

- 0-2 years old: No screen time recommended, unless video chatting with a loved one.
- 2-5 years old: One hour or less of screen time per day.