



A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

## Screen Time: Establishing Boundaries for Your Military Child

### Screen Time Consumption and Research

Decreases in Psychological Well-Being Among American Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Screen Time During the Rise of Smartphone Technology,

<http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Femo0000403>

Media Moms and Digital Dads by Yalda T. Uhls, PhD.

[http://www.yaldatuhls.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01PressKit.MMDD\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.yaldatuhls.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01PressKit.MMDD_FINAL.pdf)

Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking our Kids – and How to Break the Trance, by Nicholas Kardaras, Ph.D., 2016.

Why Limit Your Child's Media Use,

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/The-Benefits-of-Limiting-TV.aspx>

Zero to Eight Report by Common Sense Media

[https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research/0-8\\_executivesummary\\_release\\_final\\_1.pdf](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research/0-8_executivesummary_release_final_1.pdf)

Common Sense Census, Media Use by Tweens and Teens

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/the-common-sense-census-media-use-by-tweens-and-teens>



## Establishing Boundaries

### The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following limits:

- Children younger than 18-24 months: Avoid media, except video chatting
- Children 18-24 months: High-quality programs; use media together
- Children 2-5 years: Limit to 1 hour per day; high-quality programs; use media together
- Children 6-18 years: Limit, monitor, balance; should not displace adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health

### The following questions can help to evaluate how much is too much:

- How are your children acting during and after using the screen?
- Is their behavior positive?
- Are they using high quality, age-appropriate media?
- Is there a healthy balance between screen time and screen-free activities?

### Consider purpose of screen time.

- Value quality over quantity. Watch for labels that use “educational” as an advertisement.
- Balance screen communication with face to face communication.
- Teach positive stress management. Find a stress management plan for teens at [http://www.fosteringresilience.com/stress\\_management\\_plan.php](http://www.fosteringresilience.com/stress_management_plan.php)

**American Academy of Pediatrics** Announces New Recommendations for Children’s Media Use, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx> and <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2591>

**Common Sense Media** helps families make smart media choices. They offer age-based and educational ratings and reviews for movies, games, apps, TV shows, websites, books, and music. Their Parent Concerns and Parent Blog help families understand and navigate the problems and possibilities of raising children in the digital age.

<https://www.common sense media.org>

**Healthy Children.org** is affiliated with the American Academy of Pediatrics. It has many resources that address children's development and healthy practices, including children and media, <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/family-life/media/pages/default.aspx>

**Public Broadcasting Service** has numerous resources for parents, including programs and apps, <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/>

### **Practical Tips for Developing Healthy Habits**

1. Establish media free zones, like the dinner table, bedrooms, or cars.
2. Consider media free days or hours where the family focuses on activities they enjoy together.
3. Be a role model of healthy habits.
4. Limit media as background noise during social or homework time.
5. Limit fast-paced or overstimulating shows or games.
6. Track time. Use apps like Forest, Freedom, In the Moment, or Flipd.
7. Enforce consistent limits and share those rules/limits with other caregivers.
8. Co-view and co-play.
9. Communicate. Talk about advertisements and false perfection, credible sources, violence; citizenship and safety.
10. Make screen time a privilege, not a right.
11. Create a Family Media Plan. Option from AAP <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>. There is a different Family Media Agreement developed by Common Sense Media, [https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/connecting\\_families/family\\_media\\_agreements\\_k-12.pdf](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/connecting_families/family_media_agreements_k-12.pdf)

### **Screen-Free Choices**

Once you establish limits and build in screen-free time, help children fill the time with meaningful activities that they enjoy. Together with your children, create a list specific to them that highlights choices for how they can spend screen-free time. You can help them find balance by listing ideas to choose from that are **creative**, **active**, **contributing** or **learning** inspired.

## Ideas for Infants-Preschoolers

There are several activities that help develop cognitive, emotional and social skills in young children.

- Read books together. It's one of the most important things you can do as a parent.
- Talk frequently with your child. Speech and language skills develop through interacting.
- Music helps language and math development.
- Join playgroups.
- Imaginary play helps children learn about themselves and the world. Critical to healthy development.
- Encourage physical activities. It develops coordination and motor skills.
- Provide finger foods to help develop fine motors skills. Children who use a lot of media are behind on fine motor skills. Let them help with household activities like setting the table, find matching socks as you're folding the laundry, or wiping off tables or doors.
- Play interactive games (peek-a-boo).

**Babies on the Homefront** provides resources and ideas for screen-free activities, [www.babiesonthefront.org](http://www.babiesonthefront.org)

**Understood.org** supports parents of the one in five children with learning and attention issues throughout their journey. It offers many resources, including free daily access to experts, a secure online community, practical tips and more. <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/signs-symptoms/developmental-milestones/skill-development-from-birth-to-age-5>

**Zero to Three** has a wealth of information on early development and wellbeing, including screen time and suggestions for activities. <https://www.zerotothree.org/>

## Ideas for Elementary School Years

During the elementary school years, we can encourage children to explore a variety of activities.

- Foster individual interests and let them explore a variety of topics.
- Teach Executive Functioning and Life Skills: This can be done with age-appropriate responsibilities such as chores, helping others or taking care of a pet.
- Foster Intellect and Creativity: Unstructured play is still important. Explore the arts such as learning to play an instrument. Have a space ready with arts and crafts supplies, where they can build, explore, or experiment. Empty moving boxes are good for building castles or tunnels.
- Build Cognitive and Problem-Solving skills: Provide puzzles or building kits. Let them help with cooking. Consider letting them experiment in the kitchen or with a science experiment station.
- Encourage Healthy Lifestyle Skills. Keep children moving. Participate in play groups, scouts or sports.

“Raising Kids to Thrive” by Dr. Ken Ginsburg and “Fostering Resilience”,  
<http://www.fosteringresilience.com/about.php>

## Ideas for Middle School and High School Years

Parents may welcome technology into their home, but having it overtake every aspect of our tween's and teen's life can cause us all to get stressed out. Here are some ideas to help our older children have moments of "hands-free" growth.

- Build and refine Life Skills: True experiences instead of simulated ones.
- Turn a hobby into a passion. Explore through volunteering or working part-time.
- Reading for the future. It's never too soon to start preparing for college.
- Intellect and Creative Skills: Consider theater, music, photography, crafts. Delve into topics or activities that interest them.
- Increase Cognitive and Critical Thinking Skills: Do repairs around the house, design dream house, cook, do sudoku or board questions. As parents, ask open-ended questions regarding media interests.
- Social, Emotional, and Communication Skills: Spend time with family such as at dinner. Join a group or organization or create one. Write in a journal.
- Healthy Lifestyle: Sports or exercise. Sleep and relaxation. Give back to others. Teach how to manage stress without turning instantly to media as an outlet.

**Center for Parent & Teen Communication** uses the best of science on youth development and parenting to support healthy family relationships and empower parents to effectively guide teens to be their best selves. <https://parentandteen.com/>

## Additional Research:

Electronic Screen Syndrome [http://drdunckley.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RESET-YOUR-CHILDS-BRAIN\\_Ch-1-Health-Summit-Gift\\_P.pdf](http://drdunckley.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RESET-YOUR-CHILDS-BRAIN_Ch-1-Health-Summit-Gift_P.pdf)

Gaming Disorder <http://www.who.int/features/qa/gaming-disorder/en/>

### **MCEC podcast “For the Sake of the Child”**

“Kids and Media” with Dr. Yalda T. Uhls

Listen in at: <https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-ri8fh-a269a4>

In this podcast, Dr. Yalda T. Uhls, Senior Advisor for Common Sense Media and author of *Media Moms & Digital Dads: A Fact Not Fear Approach to Parenting in the Digital Age* answers parent’s questions and offers insight and practical advice about establishing screen time boundaries.

PLEASE, if you liked the workshop and find the information useful, consider providing your feedback.



<https://ptopworkshopfeedback.questionpro.com/>

### NOTES