

Family Digital Plan - Primary School



Screens have become a big part of our daily lives, and it can sometimes feel overwhelming to manage their presence in our family time. It's important to balance enjoying screen time and engaging in activities without them. One way to navigate this is by creating a family agreement encouraging everyone to share their thoughts on when and how we use screens together. Taking this approach can help us understand each other better and cultivate a healthier relationship with technology, ensuring that we still prioritise meaningful moments as a family.

This plan is for you and anyone else in your home or caring for your child to discuss, agree on, and plan with your children how your family will approach screens. We have given you some suggestions and tips.

Top Tips from the Health Professionals for Safer Screens

Primary-age children should not be on social media. If you use short-form media such as YouTube Kids - turn off the autoplay so there is no risk of doom scrolling.

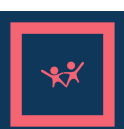
Choose high-quality, age-appropriate TV programming such as CBeebies or CBBC.

Make sure you know what your child is using - they should always be on a screen you can see; the bigger, the better.




Be careful with “educational” apps - currently, no one has to prove they are educational. Limit their usage, as too much time spent on them has the same impact as non-educational apps.

Think about how everyone in the family behaves around screens. Children copy their parents.


Do not give young children their own devices - allow access, not ownership.



1. What devices do we use?

| What devices do we use  | What do we like about them  | What don't we like about them  |
|--|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

2. What would you do differently?

| What would you like the adults in your family to do differently? | What would you like the children in your family to do differently? |
|--|---|
|  <p><i>Reports suggest adults touch their phones over 2000 times a day.</i></p> | <p><i>While screens may seem like a good solution to calm a child down, increasing screen time is associated with greater anger and frustration in the long term and a lower ability to manage emotions..</i></p> |
| | |

As a family, it is important to spend time together without screens. Research indicates that both children and adults benefit greatly from chatting, eating, sleeping, and playing together without screens interrupting.



3. Where should it be screen-free?



Creating screen-free zones is an effective way to ensure everyone adheres to the agreement. Devices should never be allowed in bedrooms, as they can disrupt sleep. (Evidence suggests that even having access to them in a bedroom e.g. in a bedside table drawer can negatively impact on sleep almost as much). Additionally, adults should always be aware of what their children are doing online.

| | Could this be screen-free? | What could we do instead? |
|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bedrooms | | <i>Read bedtime story</i> |
| Bathrooms | | |
| Car | | <i>Listen to a book or a podcast</i> |
| Outdoors | | |
| Playground | | |
| | | |

4. When should it be screen-free?



Mealtimes can be such a valuable opportunity for connection and togetherness. Taking a break from screens during these moments fosters meaningful conversations and helps us to be more mindful of what we're eating. Many families may not realise that eating in front of screens can lead to overeating, which can be concerning. Additionally, creating a screen-free time at least an hour before bedtime can make a real difference for our children, helping them to relax and get a better night's sleep. It's all about nurturing those moments that promote well-being for everyone.



| When can we agree not to use screens? | | What could we do instead? |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Bedtime | | |
| Mealtimes | | |
| Getting ready | | |
| Journey to and from school | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |

6. What can we do as a family instead of screens?

Getting outside is a brilliant thing to do together - not only is it fun, but studies show a clear link between excessive screen use and difficulties with concentration, sleep, and mental health. Children must get outside in daylight for at least 76 minutes per day to help protect their eyes from short-sightedness.

| What do we pledge that we are going to do differently? |
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