

# Screen time rules

This guide covers science-backed screen time limits by age, approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

## Babies (0–18 Months): Avoid Screens

AAP Recommendation: Zero screen time (except video calls with family).

Why?

Infants learn best through face-to-face interaction (Pediatrics, 2018).  
Screen exposure may delay language development



## Toddlers (18–24 Months): 30 Minutes Max

- Educational programs with slow pacing (Sesame Street, Ms. Rachel).
- Avoid: Fast-cut cartoons (e.g., Cocomelon) – linked to hyperactivity (University of Alberta, 2022).



## Preschoolers (2–5 Years): 1 Hour/Day

Best Apps: Khan Academy Kids, PBS Kids (no ads/autoplay).

Avoid: Mindless scrolling on YouTube Kids.





### School-Age Kids (6–12 Years): 1–2 Hours/Day

- No screens 1 hour before bed (blue light disrupts sleep cycles).
- Social Media Curfew: Disable notifications after 9 PM.



### Teens (13–18 Years): 2–3 Hours/Day

- No screens 1 hour before bed (blue light disrupts sleep cycles).
- Social Media Curfew: Disable notifications after 9 PM.



**For kids under 2, screens offer no  
proven benefits—only risks.  
Prioritize real-world play.**

**—Sarah P. Adams**



# 5 Actionable Tips to Reduce Screen Time

1

- Set a Family Media Plan:  
Use AAP's free [Family Media Plan Tool](#).

2

- Tech-Free Zones  
Ban devices at meals + bedrooms.

3

- Swap Screens for Play  
Example: "After 30 mins of TV, build a fort together!"

4

- Use Parental Controls  
Apple Screen Time or Google Family Link tutorials.

5

- Model Healthy Habits  
Kids mimic parents—put your phone away!

# 50 Fun & Healthy Screen-Free Activities for Kids

## Creative & Artsy

- ☐ Make a DIY craft with recycled items
- ☐ Paint with watercolors or finger paints
- ☐ Make paper airplanes and have a flying contest
- ☐ Create a scrapbook or collage
- ☐ Design greeting cards for family members
- ☐ Try origami
- ☐ Draw a comic strip
- ☐ Create a homemade puppet show
- ☐ Make salt dough sculptures
- ☐ Decorate rocks with paint or markers

## Outdoor Adventures

- ☐ Go on a nature scavenger hunt
- ☐ Build a fort using sticks and leaves
- ☐ Ride a bike or scooter
- ☐ Play hopscotch
- ☐ Go on a bug hunt
- ☐ Fly a kite
- ☐ Create a backyard obstacle course
- ☐ Jump rope challenges
- ☐ Water balloon toss
- ☐ Plant a small garden or care for a houseplant



## Brain-Boosting Fun

☐

Do a jigsaw puzzle

☐

Play board games (like Uno, Guess Who, etc.)

☐

Try a science experiment (e.g., baking soda + vinegar volcano)

☐

Build with LEGO or blocks

☐

Create a treasure map and go on a treasure hunt

☐

Solve a riddle or make up your own

☐

Try a memory game

☐

Do a DIY STEM project

☐

Learn a magic trick

☐

Play a game of "20 Questions"



## Family & Social Activities

☐

Help cook or bake something new

☐

Write a story together

☐

Have a family talent show

☐

Start a gratitude jar

☐

Interview a grandparent or family member

☐

Make a family photo album

☐

Create a family tree

☐

Have a picnic

☐

Play charades

☐

Try storytelling with a twist (each person adds a sentence)





## Calm-Down & Mindful Time

- ☐ Read a book or listen to an audiobook
- ☐ Do some kid-friendly yoga
- ☐ Meditate or breathe deeply for 5 minutes
- ☐ Draw or color in a mindfulness coloring book
- ☐ Take a relaxing bubble bath
- ☐ Build a cozy reading nook
- ☐ Listen to calming music
- ☐ Journal or write in a diary
- ☐ Practice simple stretching
- ☐ Watch the clouds and find shapes in them

Full Blog post  
[Screen Time Limits by Age: Science-  
Backed Guidelines for Kids \(2025\)](#)

