

Screen Time Guidelines for Parents, Caregivers, Educators, and Coaches
[Cindy Pierce](#) - 2024

Screen time suggestions for parents and caregivers:

- No phone zones for kids **and adults** (car, at the table, in the bedroom)
- Establish unplugged times and spaces (adults and kids)
- Limit double screen (watching a show and checking social media)
- Homework and screen time in a common area rather than in their room
- Kids contribute to the monthly payment for phone – earn money around the house
- Required viewing of your choice before they can have a phone (“Yes, as soon as...”)
The Social Dilemma and *Our Kids Online* – for parents and older kids
- Filters give a false sense of safety – have challenging conversations, establish limits *and* use filters
- Be vigilant about screen-time conversations and support building independence skills offline

First Phone:

- Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Anxious Generation* suggests waiting until 9th grade; there is also a movement of [Wait till 8th](#) grade for a phone despite the norms of your community
- Avoid “fitting in” as the reason to allow them to have a phone (for parents and kids)
- Have them pay at least part of monthly fees
- Start a social media account together and ease them into independence
- Make a contract together, including clear consequences, and hold them accountable
- Telephone conversation etiquette established before they get a cell phone
- Use privacy settings - permission needs to be granted

Ask your kids questions:

Without using names...

- What social media behavior annoys you?
- What do you like about how people post or comment on Instagram? SnapChat? Tik Tok?
- What do you dislike about how people post or comment on Instagram? SnapChat? Tik Tok?
- What works well in group chats? What doesn't?
- How much is too much texting for you? How do you handle it?
- Has anyone shared your texts or photos without permission?
- What have you found surprising when you meet someone you follow in person?
- What happened on your phone today that was interesting? Boring? Funny? Irritating?
- How do some teens use social media platforms to create community? Push for social change?
- What influencers do you respect and admire? What do you like about what and how they connect with their followers?

Model Digital Citizenship:

- Adults balance time online and off; be available and present
- Kids feel ignored and resentful when adults are on devices and claim they need to be on their phone “for work.” Remember: Social survival online & off is hard work for kids
- Discuss and model solitude and time without devices, work, or tasks
- Multitasking myth; consider your tendency to “make busy” and believe you are efficient
- Think before asking Siri; adults need to keep working their brains and model that for kids
- Tell children about a time you had to resolve something offline
- Take a look through your social media behavior; walk the talk
- Ask permission to post photos of your kids
- Avoid checking the school portal! (This is the biggest request from students of all ages)