

Screen Time Tips for 9 to 12 Year Old's

The same parenting rules apply to screen time as to anything else — set a good example, establish limits, and talk with your teen about it.

To make your teenager's screen time more productive:

- **Create a family media plan.** Have a central location for them to be using their phones, laptop, etc. Utilize the American Academy of Pediatrics media plan creator as a resource.
 - <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx#home>
- **Know the common apps that teenagers are using. Have content locks on their phone that you have placed there.** There are thousands of apps and games that claim to be educational, but not all of them are. Search online to see which ones educators and doctors consider the best. All smart phones have a setting that parents can place to prevent certain content and apps from being accessed. Take the time to enforce this on your teen's phone prior to allowing them to access a phone.
- **Schedule plenty of non-screen time into your teen's day.** Unstructured free time is important for building creativity, so teens should have time away from screens every day. Talk about extracurricular activities that aren't associated with screens that they can be apart of. Allow them to interact with a structured activity that is supervised by adults. Family meals and bedtimes are also important times to put the screens away and interact with your teen.

Availability - This is a tech driven world and kids are exposed to screens almost everywhere, but it does not need to consume them or the family.

- [Screen Strong](#) provides education, resources, support, and podcasts to help stop screen conflict and prevent screen addiction.

Healthy Boundaries/Guidelines - In addition to setting healthy boundaries and guidelines for kids, parents also need to make sure their kids are getting each day: 9-11 hours of sleep, 60 minutes of physical exercise and less than 2 hours of screen time.

- [Healthychildren.org](#)- Customize for free a media plan for your family by inputting each child's age.
- [Internetsafety101.org](#)- Provides free tools to set age-appropriate guidelines and has youth contracts/pledges.

Communication - The more parents know about the online world, the better they can equip their kids in navigating through it. Early conversations with kids will help prepare them for what they may encounter and what to avoid.

- [Focus on the Family](#) has great articles and broadcasts like [Helping Our Kids Manage Technology Well](#) that help guide and encourage parents.
- The book [Screen Kids](#) by Gary Chapman and Arlene Pellicane is a wonderful resource for parents that talks about "5 relational skills every child needs in a tech-driven world."

Protection - Parents need to first talk to their kids about internet safety. There are several protection tools, apps, and software to help monitor your kids' online activity and to keep them safe.

- [Internetsafety101.org](#) has comprehensive guides/videos on how to set parent controls on devices, other safety tools and preventative solutions.
- [Covenant Eyes](#) is an accountability service that monitors screen activity and offers additional protection with porn blocking and SafeSearch.

- Bark helps families manage and protect their children's online lives. It monitors 30+ of the most popular apps and social media platforms, including text messaging and email for signs of digital dangers. Similar apps are Qustodio and Net Nanny.
- Common Sense Media lists reviews of age-appropriate apps, games, and programs.
- Plugged In is part of Focus on the Family and lists reviews of movies, TV shows, music, games, books and YouTube channels.

Pornography - It is imperative for parents to talk with their kids early about the dangers of pornography.

- Protectyoungminds.org provides curriculum to prepare and prevent. It also provides resources to help kids who have been exposed to pornography. Many books can be found on their website that can help equip parents when talking to their kids including Good Pictures Bad Pictures.
- Culturereframed.org provides free programs that guides parents through topics that provide skills to build their child's resilience and resistance to hypersexualized culture and the impacts of pornography.

Mental/Emotional Health - Multiple sources agree there is a link between screen time (more than 2 hours a day) and increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness in kids.

- Parents can access one of the research articles, Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study at ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.
- This topic is also discussed in the book Screen Kids. The book also gives warning signs of emotional stress, addiction to screens and cyberbullying. Stopbullying.gov offers information on cyberbullying, prevention, and resources.

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