

## Screen Time Tips for Children 13+

**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.

**Intended Use** – When it comes to raising teenagers, priorities and values differ greatly from home to home. Identify your expectations: the what, why, how, when, where for creating rules, boundaries, rewards and consequences.

**Modeling** – More is caught than taught. Mirror neurons are strong at this age of development. Teens do what they see and say what they hear.

- Develop open communication with your teenager. They are all craving love and attention so taking the time to communicate with your teenager in a positive way is a great start to allowing them to talk with about concerns, bullying, stressors, etc.
- Be aware of your stress levels. Emotions can be reflected and felt by the people around you so when interacting with your teen, make sure that you are calm and focused in on them. Reduce distractions.
- Connect with your teen over common interests. Finding common ground allows for a conversation to start and a relationship to develop. Find something that both of you are interested in and spend time with them doing those activities.

**Protection** – Be consistent and available. Know who they are with and what they are watching and hearing. Set password protections on all screens and look into Internet Filtering Software.

1. Qustodio: Best Internet filter software overall. ...
2. Net Nanny: Best for monitoring your kids. ...
3. Kaspersky Safe Kids 2021: Best value internet filter app. ...
4. Surfie: Great for cell phones. ...
5. Bark: Best for detecting hidden threats.

- Set up a check system for online purchases. Work alongside them as they research where they want to purchase items from. Have a joint account that is utilized just for online purchases.

**Communication** – Avoid saying “because I said so”. Have age appropriate discussions to help them think and reason instead of acting on emotion.

- Eye Contact plays a crucial role in developing emotional connections
- Why we have rules
- Needs vs Wants
- Similarities and differences between boys and girls
- Medically accurate names for private parts
- Role play. Prepare them with expectations and responses
- Ask your teen about the differences in apps like TikTok, You Tube, and Snapchat. Being genuinely interested in their life will lead to them being more open in their conversations with you.

- Talk to them about cyber bullying, words, photos, and actions affecting the potential for jobs and other applications.

### **Pornography**

- *Physical* – there is the potential for experimentation that could potentially result in injury to the genital areas.
- *Mental* – viewing these images can cause a lowered self-esteem which can lead to anxiety, depression, and potentially suicidal thoughts.
- *Emotional* – we can either view ourselves in a negative light or we can cause others to become emotionally affected because they feel like they don't meet certain standards of expectations.

### **Mental Health**

- There are several negative mental health affects of the overuse of technology in teenagers:
  - *Isolation*—there isn't a human connection occurring over a screen. More people feel socially isolated because social skills aren't being developed and there is a lack of empathy that allows your teen to feel appreciated and loved.
  - *Depression*—negative self-image, bullying, isolation, and loneliness all can cause teenagers to feel depressed and struggle with the feeling of being wanted.
  - *Anxiety*—viewing through the social media lens can cause teenagers to feel like they aren't living life like everyone else. They can feel like they are missing out which could cause an increase in anxiety and can affect their development and learning ability.



**Practice the Pause** – Self-control is a muscle that can be trained even in young teens to young adults.

### **Book Recommendations:**

- *The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers* by Gary Chapman
- *Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood* by Lisa Damour, Ph D.
- *Parenting the New Teen in the Age of Anxiety* by Dr. John Duffy

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How can you help your teen during these years?

It's important to learn about some of the behaviors and emotional responses you can expect during these years of becoming adults. Anxiety, outbursts, and rebellion are common issues in teenagers this age. Knowing what to expect can help you to be patient and get through the stressful moments.

- **Offer your teen healthy foods.** Keep lots of fruits, vegetables, and healthy snacks in the house.
- **Make time for your teen to be social and active, but also include times of rest.**
- **Talk to your teen.** This helps teenagers develop a relationship with you that is comfortable.
- **Allow your teen to interact with fellow teenagers.** It is vital for teenagers to start developing social skills so allow them to interact with friends that you know and trust.
- **Teach skills,** such as communication, chores, cooking/accounting, and other activities that they will need as adults.
- **Set limits that help your child feel safe and secure but that also allow your teen to explore.**

Raising teenagers can be difficult. They are going through massive emotional upheaval, challenges at school, bullying, and other social and psychological changes. Find parent groups that can help guide you and seek council from other parents.

References: 1) The Australian Parenting Website. (2021, April 27) Internet Safety: Teenagers. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/cyberbullying-online-safety/internet-safety-teens> 2) Robinson, Lawrence and Segal, Jeanne. (2020, September) Help for Parents of Troubled Teens. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/helping-troubled-teens.htm#> 3) Johnson, Jon. (2020, February 25) Negative effects of technology: What to know. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/negative-effects-of-technology#psychological-effects> 4) Reach Out. Com. (2021) Help your teenager develop self-control. <https://parents.au.reachout.com/common-concerns/everyday-issues/things-to-try-risk-taking/help-your-teenager-develop-self-control> 5) Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2021) The Growing Child: Adolescent 13 to 18 Years. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-growing-child-adolescent-13-to-18-years>

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