SCREEN TIME Parent Factsheet

3-7 year olds

Top Tips

Screen time can be an appealing way to keep young children occupied but should be balanced with *conversation, play* and *other activities* which help them develop. Supervision and use of tools can help manage their time on devices.

1. Find a healthy balance **- Get involved in your child's online activities. Have fun, play games and learn together online, just as you would in the physical world. If you feel they are spending too much time online, try reminding them of the things they like to do offline and help them to create a healthy balance.**
2. Make use of settings and controls **- Many digital devices, services and content providers offer a range of parental controls, including screen time limits. The Internet Matters website has some useful guides on these. You can choose the type of content and options that are suitable for your child.**
3. Focus on quality not quantity **– Instead of worrying too much about how long your child is spending online, focus on what they are doing online. Encourage your child to use their device purposefully and for a range of different activities. This could be to watch an educational video or to keep in touch with family and friends who live far away etc.**
4. Establish good habits early on **– Help your child recognise how going online makes them feel and encourage them to take a break when they need to. Your child may need support in doing this, such as timers and reminders. Remember at this age children often mimic the behaviour they see around them, so think about what your own relationship with technology looks like to them and what good (or bad!) habits you might pass on.**

Conversation starter ideas

1. **What do you enjoy doing online? What do you enjoy doing offline?**
2. **Who can help you if you feel worried about something online?**
3. **What makes you happy when you use technology?**
4. **Does anything make you feel sad or worried when you're online? Let's talk about it together.**

7-11 year olds

Top Tips

This age range enjoy being more independent in their use of devices and are often particularly engaged by gaming. Open conversation about how screen time makes us feel and modelling good practices are key here.

1. Focus on quality not quantity **– Instead of worrying too much about how long your child is spending online, focus on what they are doing online. Encourage your child to use their device purposefully and for a range of different activities.**
2. Talk openly about screen time **- Your child may already have their own device, or you may be thinking of getting them one soon, therefore it's really important for you to go through this process together.**
3. Have clear expectations **- Clear family rules can help your child get the most out of being online. Ask your child to help create some family rules. This can be a chance to set boundaries around time limits, and where their devices are left overnight – not in bedrooms!**
4. Make use of settings and controls **- Many digital devices, services and content providers offer a range of parental controls, including screen time limits. The Internet Matters website has some useful guides on these. You can choose the type of content and options that are suitable for your child**
5. Model best practice **– Help your child establish healthy habits early on by modelling to them good practice. This could be as simple as making sure there are no devices at the dinner table or putting devices down when having a conversation.**

Conversation starter ideas

1. **What different activities do you enjoy doing online?**
2. **Are there any questions you would like to ask me about your time spent online?**
3. **Are you happy with how long you spend online? How does going online make you feel?**
4. **Who can help you if you feel worried about something online?**
5. **Let's talk about what we can do as a family to help each other manage our time online**

11-14 year olds

Top Tips

11-14's are likely to use their devices for communication and can feel disconnected without them. Have clear expectations and stick to them, but support young people this age in managing their time online themselves.

1. Focus on quality not quantity **– Instead of worrying too much about how long your child is spending online, focus on <u>what</u> they are doing online. Encourage your child to use their device purposefully and for a range of different activities. This could be for homework, to keep in touch with family and friends who live far away etc.**
2. Talk openly about digital wellbeing **- Children this age are likely to recognise that technology can impact the way they are feeling. Have an open, honest, and calm dialogue about the way this happens covering the positives and negatives. Remember that the things they see and hear, the people they communicate with and the pressures they experience may all factor into their digital wellbeing.**
3. Have clear expectations **- Clear family rules can help your child get the most out of being online. Ask your child to help create some family rules.**
4. Model best practice **– Help your child establish healthy habits by modelling to them good practice. This could be as simple as making sure there are no devices at the dinner table or buying an alarm clock and <u>keeping devices out of bedrooms at night</u>. Show them that technology use impacts all of us by talking openly about how being online makes you feel, or reflecting openly on moments when you needed to take a break.**
5. Use settings and controls together **- We often hear that older children would like to spend less time online but feel they don't always know how. Try exploring the digital wellbeing options that the device offers and discuss with them how to use this to their benefit.**

Conversation starter ideas

1. **How are young people your age spending their time online?**
2. **Let's talk about how going online makes you feel.**
3. **What can we do as a family to help each other manage our time online?**
4. **Are there any questions you'd like to ask me about your screen time use/how long you spend online?**
5. **Are there any new features/updates on your apps/games/device to help with screen time? Can you show me how they work?**