

REDUCING & MANAGING SCREEN TIME

Digital devices are an important part of modern life, but excessive or unstructured screen use can impact children's attention, learning, sleep, emotional regulation, and mental health. Research shows that even the presence of a phone can reduce concentration, and constant notifications can make it harder for both children and adults to stay focused and engaged. By setting clear boundaries and modelling healthy technology habits, parents can help children develop self-regulation skills and a balanced relationship with technology that supports their well-being now and in the future.

1

Model Healthy Device Use

- Actively narrate how you manage your own devices (e.g., "I'm putting my phone away now so I can focus on you").
- Decide where devices are stored when not in use (e.g., charging station outside bedrooms).

2

Reduce Distractions

- Review notifications on phones and tablets and turn off most non-essential alerts.
- When full attention is needed (homework, family time), leave devices in another room.
- Research suggests that even having a phone turned off but nearby can reduce brain power.

3

Make Devices Less Tempting.

- Change phones or tablets to grayscale to reduce the visual appeal of apps and games.
- Lower screen brightness and avoid colourful wallpapers.

4

Set Clear Limits Using Technology

Schedule WiFi shut-off times using:

- o Your router's parental controls or time scheduling features, or
- o A smart plug with a timer connected to your router.

5

Build Consistent Routines

- Establish screen-free times (e.g., before school, during meals, and before bedtime).
- Keep screens out of bedrooms whenever possible.



Books and Online Resources for Parents

Online Resources and Tools

- [Determining Digital Dependence: An Online Assessment to Explore a Child's Reliance, Distress and Compulsive Online Use](#)
- [Parent Social Media Guides](#) (West Vancouver Schools)
- [Common Sense Media](#) (American website for safe and developmentally appropriate media use)
- [Media Smarts](#) (Canadian website for safe and developmentally appropriate media use)
- [Building Better Tech Habits: A Guide to Digital Well-being](#)
- [Social Media and Youth Mental Health Resource Padlet](#)
- [Parenting Digital Natives](#) (West Vancouver Schools)
- [Digital Addictions: A Family Guide to Prevention, Signs and Treatment](#)
- [Common Sense Media Digital Contract](#)
- [Family Internet and Device Contract](#)
- [Readiness for a Cell Phone](#)

Books

“Growing Up Public: Coming of Age in an Digital World” by Devorah Heitner

“Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World” by Devorah Heitner

“The Anxious Generation” by Jonathan Haidt

