

# Summer with less screens

When the kids are home from school for the summer, it can be hard to avoid technology. Kids (and adults) are used to constant entertainment from the television, computer, smartphones and tablets. But, reducing screen time can have many benefits for families:

- Boredom is a great way for kids to learn to be creative. If they're always entertained by a screen, kids don't have a chance to be bored and to learn how to entertain themselves.
- Sitting in front of a screen means time not spent getting exercise.
- Some studies suggest that too much screen time can lead to behavior problems, lack of good thinking skills, and sleep problems.



It's not always realistic to avoid screens completely. If you can't, look for ways to limit screen time. Try these tips:

- Choose certain times of day to be screen-free. For instance, you can choose to let kids have 30 minutes of screens after lunch, but morning is for screen-free play.
- Watch the clock. Decide on a daily limit of screen time, such as two hours, and stick with it. Consistent rules help kids know what they can expect each day, so there is less complaining.

- Visit the library. If you can get kids to read books they like, they won't miss screens as much.
- When you do watch TV, watch shows together as a family. Choose educational shows when possible.

## ***Have a plan***

A family media plan can help you stay on track with screen time. Create yours at [www.healthychildren.org/English/media](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/media).