

# CASSY

## Conversations

### Screen Time

## How much is too much?

Topics discussed between  
you and CASSY Therapists

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### Discussion Points

How much **screen time** is too much  
for my child?

What are some ideas to **engage my child** in family  
activities that don't involve screen time?

Is **more screen time ok** since my child can't leave the  
house as much now?

Should I know the **passwords** to my child's phone and  
social media accounts?

What should I keep in mind when I **talk to my  
child** about internet safety?

What tools are out there to help with  
**monitoring** and managing my  
child's screen time?





## Parent

How much screen time is too much for my child?



## Therapist

This is a difficult question to answer since **recommended screen time** varies depending on age, type of screen time usage, and content. However, it's helpful to be aware of the **signs and symptoms** that your child may benefit from cutting down. Some indicators to look out for include:

- Your child tries to get on a device first thing in the morning, right after they wake up (to engage in screen time that does not involve school).
- Your child complains or throws a temper tantrum when you tell them it's time to turn off the device.
- You've caught your child sneaking screen time or lying about how long he or she has been on the device.
- Your child seems to only laugh, smile, or show signs of happiness when using a screen and seems frustrated/anxious when not using a device.
- He or she uses a device to feel better after having a bad day.
- Your child isn't interested in other things, especially things he or she used to enjoy.



## Parent

What are some ideas to engage my child in family activities that don't involve screen time?



## Therapist

Have them help make dinner or other meals, are there some family recipes you could teach them? Buy some craft materials from the Dollar store and make cards or other art projects. Have a **weekly family movie night** where you rotate who picks the movie. Bring out those **board games** from the closet. Make a fort and start reading a book aloud to your kids or do a puzzle together. Go for after dinner walks or a hike on the weekend. Kids may struggle with what to do without their phone or iPad at first, but after some time their imaginations will kick back in. Sometimes it's helpful to create a "screen-free activities" list in advance so that kids have some curated ideas of ways to spend their time.



## Parent

Is more screen time ok since my child can't leave the house as much now?



## Therapist

School is taking place on a screen and most kids' preferred activities include **video games** or **social media scrolling**, so overall screen time will naturally go up. Additionally, many kids are sustaining social connection with their peers through screen time while in-person socialization is not available to them.

Parents can first look at making sure screen time isn't replacing other needs such as sleep, eating, family time, exercising and hobbies. If your child is getting those other needs met then it's permissible to allow additional screen time as a boredom buster. But if your child is replacing getting those needs met with being in front of a screen, then it may be time for some intervention.



## Parent

Should I know the passwords to my child's phone and social media accounts?



## Therapist

Did you know most social media accounts require users to be at least 13 years old?

If you have an **elementary** aged child, regular supervision on the phone is needed which would include knowing what apps are being used and passwords to check content regularly. A **middle** school aged kid may want more privacy but adult supervision should still be implemented, having a phone is a privilege, not a right. Once a teen reaches **high school** age then more privacy around text conversations and social media use may be allowed, but there should still be rules around the amount of use.

The American Psychological Association recommends that parents co-view media with their children and keep an open line of communication around what they are seeing online and what to look-out for to keep themselves safe.



## Parent

What should I keep in mind when I talk to my child about internet safety?



## Therapist

It is important to talk to your child about the risks associated with **internet** use and **social media**. Keeping an open line of communication will help them feel comfortable turning to you if they run into problems online.

**Basic guidelines** to share with your child may include:

- Follow family rules and those set by the internet provider
- Never revealing personal information such as address, phone number, school name, or location with strangers.
  - Do not share passwords with friends
- Never respond to a threatening email, message, post, or text but notify parents immediately
- Always tell a parent or other trusted adult about any communication or conversation that was scary or hurtful



## Parent

What tools are out there to help with monitoring and managing my child's screen time?



## Therapist

### [Healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

Provides the steps to create a **family media plan**. Some strategies include turning in phones before bedtime, implementing times when phones are not allowed for the whole family, using app time limits that can be set up on the phone as well as **parental restrictions** to block content not appropriate for young children. It's also important to lead by example and demonstrate your ability to manage screen time. One of my middle school clients actually appreciates that her Mom takes away her phone every night.

### [Ourpact.com](https://www.ourpact.com)

Our Pact is an app that gives parents complete control over their child's screen time by **limiting access** to specific apps based on specific schedules and/or time limits. It allows parents to manually grant or block access to the internet and apps on their child's device at any time, from anywhere.

[Commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org) (English and Spanish)

[Healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) (English and Spanish)

[Kidshealth.org](https://www.kidshealth.org) - Internet Safety