

Concerned about screen time



7 practical things to do as a family:

1.

Get to know how your child uses screens



Not all screen time is equal, so it helps to understand what they are doing online and how it makes them feel. Try asking what they enjoy most and what feels less helpful so you can build a clearer picture together.

3.

Discuss the design features that keep us coming back and adjust your settings



Apps and devices are designed to keep us engaged. Everything from notifications to rewards has been geared towards keeping us online and coming back when we do step away. Talk about these features to help your child be aware of the impact they can have and explore settings together.

- **Infinite scroll** – keeps you scrolling when there is no end point
- **Autoplay** – keeps you watching when a video ends
- **Content recommendations** – keeps you viewing
- **Notification colours** – red to make you check
- **Rewards** – gamify your time online
- **Viral, short form content** – keeps you scrolling

- Change notification settings in apps devices to reduce frequency
- Turn off autoplay on video platforms
- Use wellbeing settings to set app limits

4.

Build screen time gradually with age



- **Under 5s** – Avoid solo screen use and limit screens to purposeful calls with loved ones or videos which are enjoyed together.
- **6-11s** – Focus on high-quality age-appropriate content. Avoid autoplay videos and balance screen time with other activities.
- **12+** – Focus on how screens are used and the feelings they provoke rather than total hours.

6.

Start with small, manageable changes and bring them in as a family



You could agree on screen free times such as bedtime, mealtimes or moments when you want to focus on each other. Turning off screens at least an hour before bed and charging devices outside bedrooms can also protect sleep.

2.

Support your child to notice how online activities link to their feelings



Talk about how different activities make them feel, whether they lift their mood or leave them drained. Ask what feels good, what feels less helpful and what they might want to change so they can make healthier choices over time.

5.

Introduce screen time choices



Young people respond best when they are given a choice rather than a rule to follow. Offer choices within clear boundaries, like 'one more game or one more video', to help make these changes feel fair and achievable.

7.

Be a positive role model



Remember that what you do counts. Children notice our habits, so try not to endlessly scroll around them. You can also explain your choices, like saying, "I am putting my phone down so we can talk." Showing healthy tech habits yourself often makes more difference than simply setting rules.

If you're worried about a child's safety or wellbeing, then seek help and advice from the **NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000** or **Young Minds Parent Helpline on 0808 802 5544**. You can also visit the 'Get Support' pages on our website for more advice – [mollyrosefoundation.org](https://www.mollyrosefoundation.org)