



How to Get Your Kids Off Screens and into the Great Outdoors

Getting your kids off their screens and outdoors without conflict relies on finding the right combination of strategies for you and your child. Consider planning with your family as a team some combination of:

- Time allowance
- Screen free places
- Screen free times
- Offering fun alternatives
- Working through the discomfort of boredom and withdrawal
- Recognize the power of modeling your own relationship with technology



There are only so many hours in a day. When your child is engaged in another activity, it is time they aren't using their device. **It's easier to displace a habit with something fun and different than it is to limit or forbid it.**

Set yourself and your child up for success. Keep in mind:

- Time limits provoke anxiety and set the stage for conflict.
- Technology can be your ally. Coinciding using digital health services on your child's device (and maybe your own as well).
- Meet together as a group and set up family rules and routines that you can follow as well.

On screen interests can lead to off screen activities.

- One parent reports that their child builds shelters outdoors because that's the focus of his favorite youtube channel. Another child got into rubix cubes after seeing it on youtube
- Be curious about your child's online interests to help them bring those interests into the real world
- Consider a blended approach like apps that identify plants/trees or photography





Your strategy may be unique for supporting each child to work through boredom and withdrawal without getting pulled in emotionally. When your child is complaining that there is nothing to do, you have several options. You can ignore their complaints. You can express confidence in them that they can get through this difficulty. You might express understanding, “I get that this is a huge challenge for you right now and you feel super frustrated.” When you meet with the family and develop your technology guidelines, you might take some time to brainstorm options together so that when these frustrating moments arise, they can consider that list. You can ask them in advance, “Are there some ways I can be helpful as you adapt to our new rules and routines?” You know your child best. Trust your gut and remember that coping with reasonable frustration is part of building resilience and confidence in kids.

As you apply these approaches, don’t underestimate the power of modeling. When you consider the best approaches to setting yourself and your child up for success, look at your own relationship with technology and the great outdoors! You might even want to reflect out loud with your child about what you are learning about yourself and your challenges in following technology rules and routines. You may want to think about how you spend time outdoors and how can you do some of those things together with your child.

And finally, consider meeting weekly, every other week or monthly to review as a family how guidelines are going, enthusiastically appreciate progress being made and think together about any changes that will improve your family’s way of handling this particular challenge

You may want to reach out to us to learn more about conducting family meetings, applying positive discipline and emotions coaching including how to coach problem solving to reinforce your approach. **Email us at Solutions@peaceathomeparenting.com.**

