



5 Tips for Keeping Your Kids' Phone Time Under Control

By Adam Holz | [PluggedIn.com](https://pluggedin.com) | approx. 3 min read

Phones are everywhere these days. Knowing how to approach phone time for your kids can be tricky. But here are some strategies for how to create a healthy environment for your kids.

You scream, I scream, we all scream for our screens!

Such is the mantra of our age, where smartphones populate nearly every pocket. Today's phones are, honestly, as close to a technological miracle as we've ever seen. They're so fantastic that they make Star Trek's tech—fictionally set 250 years in the future, mind you—look about as cutting-edge as cave graffiti.

But those pocket-sized screens come with oversized problems, as most any parent with a phone-equipped child or teen will tell you.

According to a [reviews.org](https://www.reviews.org) study, the average teen spends more than 7.3 hours a day being entertained by a screen. That's way more than most experts would recommend, and a lot of that time is spent on their phones.

So, how can parents help rein in their kids' phone time? It's not easy, but here's five strategies to consider.

1. Be mindful of your own phone use first.

Remember how Jesus cautioned us to be wary of the log in our own eye before dealing with a splinter in someone else's in Matthew 7:3-5? Yeah, He could've been talking about how much time we adults spend on our phones.

According to [reviews.org](https://www.reviews.org), the average Aussie adult spends 6 hours on his or her phone every day. Your kids notice all that time. And when you tell them that they should put down their phones and engage in the real world for a little bit ... well, the message isn't so effective if you're checking social media while you're giving it.

2. Create phone-free environments.

You might designate certain areas of your house as phone-free zones. You might want to bar phones from the kitchen, for example—family real estate where so many organic conversations can grow. Or you might want to declare phones off limits in certain areas during some critical family times. We've always had a "no phone" rule at the dinner table in our house, for instance.

3. Consider keeping phones out of your child's bedroom at bedtime.

Phones are often the first things kids look at when they wake up and the last thing they see when they go to bed. (And, honestly, the same is true of many adults, too.) Sometimes, they're checking them throughout the night, causing them to literally lose sleep.

I understand that many kids use their phones as their morning alarms or listen to music as they go to sleep. But taking away the temptation of the phone when kids go to bed can help those children get better sleep. And that can lead to better grades, better attitudes and healthier phone habits.

4. Institute screen and phone-time rules.

Most experts recommend that kids and teens should limit their recreational screen time to just two hours a day—ideally less. It's not easy to keep children at that level, but it can be done. Just as you might have tech-free zones, your family should have tech-free times, as well.

Discourage passive-screen multi-tasking (such as having the TV on while doing homework). Sure, this is not a phone-centric tip, but being mindful of the many screens we use can help us get a handle on all of them.

5. Encourage non-tech activities.

Kids and teens often use their phones to deal with boredom. If you channel their attention down other avenues, they just might not want to use their phones as much. Take walks or hikes. Encourage participation in sports. Institute a family board-game night. (We've got some thoughts on games you might want to try here and here. Engage in family craft activities. The possibilities are, truly, limitless.

Final Thoughts on Phone Time for Kids

The solutions don't end there, of course. Feel free to share with us your own creative ideas on how your family has limited its own phone and tech usage. Remember, phones are not bad in and of themselves. But like most tools, they can be misused. And as your own kids grow, it's important they learn good tech habits from you—habits that, perhaps, they'll one day pass on to their own kids.

