

Apple's latest operating system, iOS 12's new [Screen Time](#), is the feature parents have been waiting for. With it, we have a new tool to help prevent excessive screen time for our youth, as well as ourselves. The tool lets us limit overall time and allow you to limit the time on specific apps. It also does the same for websites and video games. This is a game changer because when these controls are built into the machine itself, it makes it nearly impossible for anyone to find ways around the restrictions on the devices.

Let's start with school hours. As you know we are working hard with the [AwayForTheDay.org](#) campaign to have phones be put away during school time. Some schools still allow students to carry phones and now with **Screen Time**, it will be possible to have things like Snapchat, Fortnite, and Instagram not be accessible on your students' iOS devices during school hours.

Screen Time is not just for phones, but also for iPads. While some schools have some controls on them, this new tool will let parents help ensure time grabbers can be prevented during school hours—the parents have to setup **Screen Time**, the schools do not have access to it controls. Preventing video games and other things from being accessible during school hours helps students focus on their classes.

What about how this now helps home life?

The goal of using something like this is to not over-parent, over-control, but to [set up systems](#) that help lessen the parent-child conflict. For example, rather than track down your tween to get the phone at, say, 9 pm, the phone can be configured to have all apps go off at 9 pm, including texting.

Adopting any new technology often sends chills down my spine. For those of you who feel the same way, I've included step-by-step instructions below on how to set this up. You and your child's devices both have to be set up for this to work.

Even before setting up the system, I really recommend being strategic about how you go about doing this with your youth—minimizing any possible push back. Consider starting with an evening of talking about all the wonderful things that do happen on screens. It is critical that our kids know that we get it, that we understand that screen time is really cool. When they believe *we know* there are many great things happening on screens, then they will be more willing to see our efforts to limit constant temptation as help, not punishment.

Another way to minimize the conflict is to start by having them, and yourself, collect data on personal daily use patterns, which **Screen Time** lets you do. Tracking and discussing use patterns can be an effective way to think about time limits.

Now on to the technical:

All Apple devices that you will be adding restrictions to—iPhones and iPads—need to be updated to iOS 12. Here is a step-by-step guide to walk you through setting up yours and your kids' devices with these new controls.

Setting up Screen Time on your device:

- Download iOS 12 on every device you want to manage going back as far as an iPhone 5s
- Go to Settings and select Screen Time to turn it on your device
- Scroll down to Use Screen Time Passcode - select a passcode that your kids won't figure out and you will easily remember
- Go to Downtime and select start and end times - This will block apps you select for the period of time you set
- Go to App Limits and select app categories you want to limit then set the amount of time allowed. You will be prompted to enter your passcode
- Go to Always Allowed and select apps you want accessible at all times (could be the phone, FaceTime and messages)
- Go to Content and Privacy Restrictions - here you can allow or not allow apps to be downloaded and in-app purchases to be made. You can also block specific content here by selecting content restrictions and choosing specific content like movies, TV shows, games, books, etc...

Setting up Screen Time on your kids' devices:

- Make sure all devices (iPhones and iPads) have iOS 12 downloaded
- Make sure all devices are set up on [Family Sharing](#) with you as the organizer and that Screen Time is turned on in Family Sharing
- One adult in the family—the family organizer—can set up Family Sharing for the group from their iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. Then an invitation is sent to the individual members. They need to accept the invitation.

- Every person in your group will need a distinct Apple ID. To learn how to get one for a child under 13, click [here](#).
- Once you've setup your family, you'll see them in Screen Time settings. Tap on your child and walk through the setup assistant to turn on Screen Time for them.
- Go to Settings and scroll down to Screen Time
- Scroll down to Use Screen Time Passcode
- Enter a Passcode that your kids won't figure out and you will easily remember
- Turn on Share Across Devices
- Select child's device (devices need to be set up on Family Sharing and signed into iCloud)
- Go to Downtime and select start and end times - This will block apps you select for the period of time you set
- Go to App Limits and choose categories of apps you want to limit then set the amount of time allowed. You will be prompted to enter your passcode
- Go to Always Allowed and select apps you want accessible at all times (could be the phone, FaceTime and messages)
- Go to Content and Privacy Restrictions —here you can allow or not allow apps to be downloaded and in-app purchases to be made. You can also block specific content here by selecting content restrictions and choosing particular content like movies, TV shows, games, books, etc.

As a note, Google has similar controls for Android phones that can be managed through its Family Link app, but this is limited to 13-year-olds and younger, leaving teenagers unsupervised on their devices. Many cell phone carriers have special plans and others ways to limit access to and time on apps as well.

If you know anyone with kids who might benefit from having help in preventing excessive screen time with their kids, please forward this TTT to them.

For today's TTT, open a conversation about this new tool.

1. How does everyone feel about using the tool first to see how much time they are spending on different screen activities?

2. How can using this tool help everyone reach tech time goals?
3. Can people see this helping decrease tech time conflicts?
4. Do you think this tool can help you to be more productive? Get more sleep?