



Screens and Summer: Hitting the Reset Button to Combat Online Fatigue

Summer is here, and it's a welcome break after a tough year that has resulted in more screen use than ever before for children. "Zoom fatigue" has become an everyday problem for many children and adults. With the end of the school year and other necessary screen demands relaxed, this is the perfect time to carve out some new screen time boundaries for the summer.

Consider these tips:

- **Schedule Breaks, and Stick to Them** – Whether it's screen-free Saturdays, device-free dinners, or a nightly technology curfew, find a dedicated time for everyone in the family to put the screens away. Even 1 hour a day can help everyone recharge. Schedule these breaks at a time when it's realistic for your family's work and other commitments, so you don't set yourself up for failure. After months of heavy usage, everyone in the family may be more open to limits than they were in the past.
- **Revisit Family Technology Plans** – Many families had informal or formal screen time rules in place before the pandemic began. If you relaxed these limits over the past year, talk as a family about what worked and what didn't. How did the extra time online make everyone feel (anxious, tired, connected)? Are there quarantine traditions you want to keep, like video chats with grandparents or nightly family dinners? Discuss the pros and cons—and consider adopting new rules that fit your family's circumstances well.
- **Make Online Time Count** – Screen time isn't all bad; in fact, it can be a tool for not only connection but also creation. Many kids have participated in online hobby classes and/or picked up new skills from video tutorials over the past year—things they may have never tried or even considered before. Encourage kids to strive for connection (e.g., video chatting with grandparents or cousins) and creation (e.g., creating their own online storybook).
- **Consider Screen Time as Part of an Overall Healthy Activity "Diet"** – Frame screen time as one part of your child's day, but not the main part. A healthy overall diet includes physical activity, outdoor play, reading, and hands-on activities. Screen time shouldn't take away from those other opportunities to exercise the body and brain.

Learn more at www.communicationandtech.org.