



FREE TEMPLATE

Our Family Media Plan

A short set of rules your whole family agrees on, so screens stop being a daily argument. Print it, fill it in together, stick it on the fridge.



Step 1

Sit down together

Pick a calm moment, not the middle of a fight about the tablet. Twenty minutes is enough. Everyone who lives in the house gets a say.

Step 2

Fill in pages 2 and 3

Tick what fits, cross out what doesn't, write your own. Let the kids suggest rules first. Rules they helped write are rules they keep.

Step 3

Sign it and review it

Everyone signs, adults included. Put a review date in the calendar. A plan for a six-year-old won't fit a seven-year-old.

Why bother writing it down?

Because "that's enough screen time" said in the moment sounds like a punishment. The same rule agreed last Sunday and stuck on the fridge is just the rule. You stop being the bad guy and the plan does the work.

A written family media plan is one of the things the US Surgeon General and the American Academy of Pediatrics both recommend to parents. They also both say the part that matters most is the grown-ups following it too. That's why page 3 has a section just for you.

What a good plan covers

- **Where** screens don't go
- **When** screens are off
- **How long** each person gets
- **What** we watch, play and post
- **How** we treat people online
- What the **adults** will do

Three rules for the rules

- **Few.** Five rules everyone remembers beat twenty nobody does.
- **Specific.** "No phones at the dinner table" works. "Less screen time" doesn't.
- **Fair.** If it applies to the kids at dinner, it applies to you at dinner.

The _____ Family Media Plan

Date _____

1 Screen-free zones

Places where screens don't go, for anyone. Tick the ones you agree on.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ The dinner table | ☐ Bedrooms overnight |
| ☐ The car on short trips | ☐ The bathroom |
| ☐ Where homework happens (unless the homework needs it) | ☐ Ours: _____ |

2 Screen-free times

Times when every screen is off or away.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ During meals | ☐ The hour before bed |
| ☐ Before school in the morning | ☐ When friends or family visit |
| ☐ Until homework and jobs are done | ☐ Ours: _____ |

All devices go on the charger in the _____ by _____ pm on school nights and _____ pm on weekends.

3 How long

Fun screen time only. Schoolwork and video calls with family don't count. See the guide on page 4 if you're not sure what number to pick.

NAME	AGE	SCHOOL DAYS	WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS	FAVOURITE THING TO DO INSTEAD

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ One screen at a time (no phone while the TV is on) | ☐ The phone or tablet's own timer keeps the time, not Mum or Dad |
| ☐ Autoplay is switched off on video apps | ☐ Extra time can be earned by: _____ |

4 What we watch, play and download

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ New apps and games get a yes from a grown-up first | ☐ We stick to shows and games rated for our age |
| ☐ We choose things that teach, make or connect over things that just scroll | ☐ Younger kids watch in the lounge, not alone in a bedroom |
| ☐ We watch or play together _____ times a week at least | ☐ Ours: _____ |

Staying safe, being kind, and the grown-ups' part

5 Staying safe and private

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ We never share our address, school, phone number or passwords online | ☐ Accounts are set to private |
| ☐ We only chat with people we know in real life | ☐ Parents know the passwords for kids' devices and accounts |
| ☐ We ask before posting a photo of someone else | ☐ Notifications are off overnight |

If I see something that scares, upsets or confuses me, I will tell _____ and I will not get in trouble for telling.

6 Being kind online

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ If I wouldn't say it to their face, I don't type it | ☐ I don't join in when someone is being picked on |
| ☐ I tell a grown-up if I see bullying, even if it isn't about me | ☐ Ours: _____ |

7 The grown-ups promise

Kids copy what we do with our phones far more than what we say about theirs. Tick what you'll commit to.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ My phone stays off the table at meals too | ☐ I put my phone away when you're talking to me |
| ☐ I won't scroll in bed | ☐ I'll ask before I post a photo of you |
| ☐ I'll say what I'm doing on my phone ("I'm just paying a bill") so it isn't a mystery | ☐ Mine: _____ |

8 If a rule gets broken

Agree this now, while everyone is calm.

9 Our own rules

Anything this page missed.

10 We all agree

We'll look at this plan again on _____ and change what isn't working. Good times to review: the start of a school year, school holidays, a birthday, or a new device.

Signed

Signed

Signed

Signed

Signed

Signed

Picking your numbers, and making the plan stick

How much screen time? What the guidelines say

AGE	RECOMMENDED LIMIT FOR FUN SCREEN TIME	WHO SAYS
Under 2	None, apart from video calls with family	World Health Organization; Australian Government
2 to 5	No more than 1 hour a day, and less is better	World Health Organization; Australian Government
5 to 17	No more than 2 hours a day, not counting schoolwork	Australian Government
Teens on social media	Over 3 hours a day is linked to double the risk of mental health problems	US Surgeon General

American paediatricians no longer give an hour limit. They ask families to look at what's on the screen and what it's replacing: sleep, play, homework, time together. Use the numbers above as a ceiling, not a target.

Under 5

- Keep it simple: two or three rules with pictures.
- Watch together and talk about what you see.
- A visible timer beats "five more minutes".
- Screens off well before bed.

5 to 12

- Let them help write the rules.
- Devices live in shared rooms.
- Agree what happens before a rule is broken.
- New games and apps get checked first.

Teenagers

- Negotiate; don't dictate. Trade freedom for trust.
- Phones charge outside the bedroom overnight.
- Talk about what apps are designed to do.
- Ask them to help set your limits too.

Let the phone enforce it

Once you've agreed the numbers, set them in the device so nobody has to police them.

- **iPhone and iPad:** Settings, Family, your child's name, Screen Time. Step by step at junomarlow.com/iphone-parental-controls
- **Android:** the free Google Family Link app. Step by step at junomarlow.com/android-parental-controls
- **Any phone:** switch off autoplay and overnight notifications.

Questions to start the conversation

- What's your favourite thing to do on a screen? What's your favourite thing to do off one?
- Have you ever felt worse after being online? What were you doing?
- When do my phone habits annoy you?
- What's one rule you think would be fair for everyone?

When it goes wrong (it will). Nobody keeps a plan perfectly, adults included. Don't tear it up. Point at the fridge, apply what you agreed in section 8, and bring it up at the next review. A plan you follow most days beats a perfect one you gave up on.

Sources. World Health Organization, guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 (2019). Australian Government Department of Health, physical activity guidelines by age; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). American Academy of Pediatrics, "How to Make a Family Media Plan" (HealthyChildren.org, 2026) and screen time guidance (2025). US Surgeon General, Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health (2023). Links to every source: junomarlow.com/research.

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