



Family settings for your child's iPhone

The built-in controls are free and, set up properly, they're enough for most families. Here is the whole setup, in order. Tick each step as you go. It takes about fifteen minutes.

Before you start

- ☐ Your child has their own Apple Account inside your Family Sharing group. Their phone is not signed in as you.
- ☐ Every device in the family is on iOS or iPadOS 27 or later. Time Allowances and Screen Time Schedules need it.
- ☐ You have **your** iPhone in your hand. You don't need the child's phone for any of this.

1 Turn on Screen Time for your child

- ☐ Open **Settings**.
- ☐ Tap **Family**, then tap your child's name.
- ☐ Tap **Screen Time** and follow the onscreen instructions.
- ☐ When asked for a Screen Time passcode, choose one your child doesn't know and can't guess. Set it on your phone, not theirs.

2 Set daily time limits (Time Allowances)

- ☐ Go to **Settings > Family > [child's name] > Time Allowances**.
- ☐ Tap **Add** and follow the prompts.
- ☐ Set a daily amount for each app category, such as Games, Social Media and Entertainment, using the sliders.
- ☐ For apps that don't fall into a category, use **Additional Time Allowances**.

When the allowance runs out, those apps stop for the day.

3 Set the times of day (Screen Time Schedule)

- ☐ Go to **Settings > Family > [child's name] > Screen Time Schedule**.
- ☐ Turn on **Schedule**, then tap **Add Schedule**.
- ☐ Choose the days it applies to. Weekdays and weekends can be different.
- ☐ Add time windows, for example "School" and "Bedtime", and choose which app categories are allowed in each.

A simple starting point: a school window that allows only what school needs, and a bedtime window that allows nothing but calls to you.

Safety settings, and making it stick

4 Choose what always works

- ☐ Under the same Screen Time menu, set the apps and people that are always allowed, whatever the schedule says.
- ☐ Phone and Messages to parents is the usual choice, so your child can always reach you.

5 Content, purchases and safety

- ☐ **Apps & Websites.** Allow or block specific apps and sites. Turn on Ask to Buy and Ask to Browse so new apps and sites need your approval.
- ☐ **Content & Privacy Restrictions.** Set age ratings and stop settings from being changed.
- ☐ **Communication Safety.** Detects images containing nudity, gore or violence and protects your child from them.

Three mistakes I see most

- **The child knows the passcode.** If they've watched you type it, change it.
- **Requests for more time get approved every night.** Decide the number once, when nobody is upset, and stick to it.
- **Limits without a conversation.** Tell them what you've set and why. Controls work best as a house rule the phone happens to enforce.

On an older version of iOS?

Before iOS 27 the same two jobs were called **App Limits** (daily time limits) and **Downtime** (scheduled time away from the screen). A lot of guides online still use those names.

The setup starts in the same place: Settings, then Family, then your child's name.

What we set

Write it down so both parents, and the child, know what the phone will do. Never write the passcode here.

CHILD	DAILY ALLOWANCE (GAMES, SOCIAL, VIDEO)	BEDTIME WINDOW	ALWAYS ALLOWED

Set on _____ Review on _____

Not sure what numbers to choose? See the guidelines by age at junomarlow.com/screen-time-by-age, and agree the house rules first with the free Family Media Plan at junomarlow.com/family-media-plan. Child on Android instead? junomarlow.com/android-parental-controls

Sources. Apple Support, "Use Screen Time to manage your child's iPhone or iPad" (September 2026), support.apple.com/en-us/108806. Apple Support, "Set Time Allowances and Screen Time Schedules", support.apple.com/guide/child-safety/azgj208bw9. Last checked 2 October 2026.
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