

**Preparing
for a
Lifetime**
It's Everyone's Responsibility

GRANDPARENT

TOOLKIT



DISCIPLINE & CHILD GUIDANCE





Discipline comes from the word disciple meaning *to teach*. Discipline provides guidance, models respect, and teaches life skills to children.

The most appropriate ways to guide children's behavior are different at different ages and will depend on their developmental abilities and needs.

You can provide support by being available to:

- Guide problem-solving
- Validate feelings with empathy
- Model expressing emotions
- Model reflecting verses reacting
- Actively listen – at child's level, with eye contact, and restate child's words

Children need adults to teach, guide, and support them as they grow and learn.

EXPLORE YOUR ROLE

Explore how your background, experiences, and stress level influence the way you guide and discipline children.

Understand your goal.

It starts with you:

- Think about your **History**.
- What are your **Hot Buttons**?
- Do you have **Knowledge of Growth and Development**?
- Do you feel the **Need to Control**?
- What is your **Stress Level**?
- Are you **Open to Change**?



You are the decisive element...

by *Haim Ginott*

“I have come to a frightening conclusion.

I am the decisive element. . .

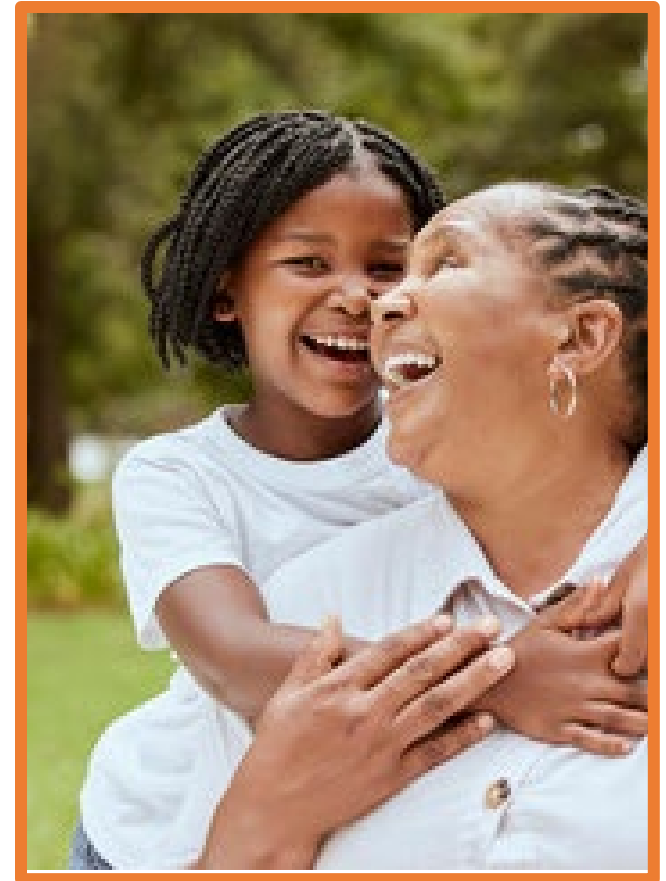
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.

It is my daily mood that makes the weather. . .

I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous.

I can humiliate or honor, hurt or heal.

In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.”



RELATIONSHIPS MATTER!



How do we build a caring community?

- We need good role models.
- We need to develop and practice good social skills.
- We need to resolve conflict sensibly (reason and compromise, rather than fighting).
- We need clear rules and expectations.



GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

Set firm, reasonable, and age-appropriate limits, or boundaries.

- A boundary is an expectation and a promise to follow through.

Boundaries are a way to alleviate anxiety in children and adolescents.

- Most adults prefer knowing what to expect, and children are no different. You can comfort a child that is feeling stressed or anxious by telling them what to expect.

“In five minutes, we’re going to get in the car and go home.”

Setting boundaries is an act of compassion.



Set clear expectations for behavior and provide a consistent, yet flexible schedule.

Create a structured environment with routines and schedules. This gives children a sense of security.

Simplify the daily routine so children aren't asked to transition from one activity to the next too often.

For smoother transition times consider these ideas:

- Provide a verbal warning before beginning a transition.
- Use music, songs, or predictable noises to signal transitions.
- Be consistent.



Consider posting a daily schedule – printed out for readers, or with picture examples for younger children.

A visual routine helps remind kids what they need to do next, so they don't lose focus during transition times.

Time

Activity

6:30 – 7:00 am

Wake up, make bed, get dressed

7:00 – 7:30 am

Eat breakfast, brush teeth & hair, pack backpack

8:00 – 3:15 pm

School

3:30 – 4:00 pm

Snack and relax

4:00 – 6:00 pm

Afterschool activities or sports, chores & homework

6:00 – 7:00pm

Family mealtime and cleanup

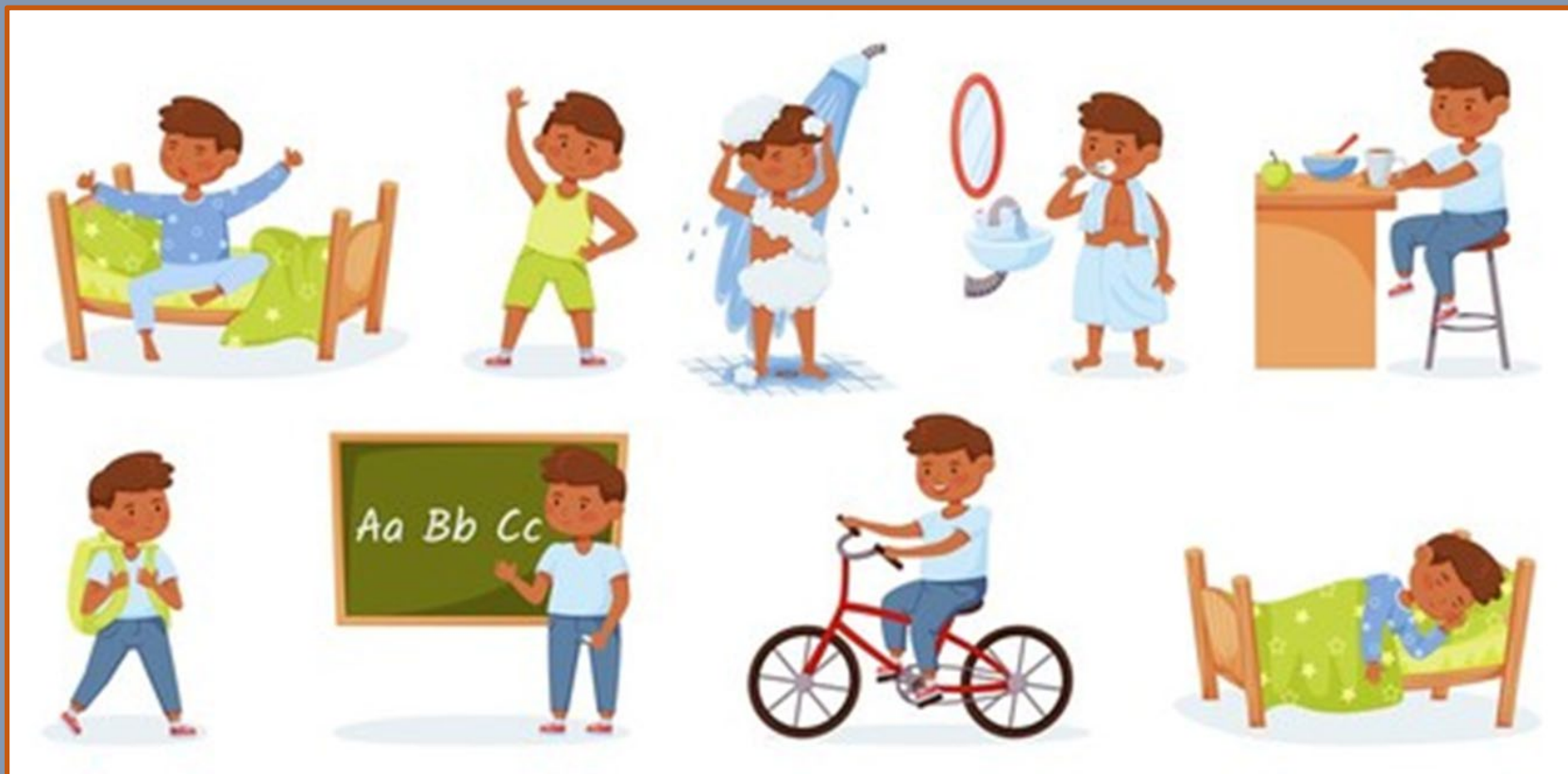
7:00 – 7:30 pm

Screen time (if homework is finished)

7:30 – 8:30 pm

Bath, books and bed

DAILY ROUTINE EXAMPLE





DAILY SCHEDULE

Each child could have their own to fill in; daily or weekly.

DAILY ROUTINE		
NAME _____		
7:00 AM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8:00 AM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9:00 AM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10:00 AM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11:00 AM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5:00 PM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

- **Assume positive intent.** Children do not want to be difficult.
- **Redirection is sometimes all that is needed** for young children to distract them.
- **Look at the environment.** Sometimes the answer is there.
- **Use natural and logical consequences** when appropriate to guide learning.
- **Ignore behavior** or stop paying attention to a specific action.



GUIDANCE FOR ADOLESCENTS



For pre-teens and teenagers, the goal of discipline is not making them behave the way we want, rather it is helping them learn life skills, emotional self-regulation, and appropriate behavior.



Set Clear Limits

- Involve your child in working out limits and rules.
- Be clear about the behavior you expect.
- Discuss responsibilities.
- Agree in advance what the consequences will be if they don't stick to the rules.
- Be willing to discuss and adjust rules.

Negotiation is a key part of communicating with pre-teens and teenagers and it shows your child you respect their ideas.

Set Appropriate Consequences

- Establish consequences for times when a teen chooses to ignore the limits.
- Set age-appropriate consequences that will go into effect if the rules are broken.
- Try to make the consequence fit the misbehavior.
 - *Coming in after curfew could result in an earlier curfew.*
 - *A drop in grades could result in a loss of video game privileges, or time spent with friends, until grades improve.*

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has established what they call the SANE guidelines to help establish appropriate consequences:

Small consequences are better

Avoid consequences that punish you (the parent or grandparent)

Non-abusive responses

Effective consequences

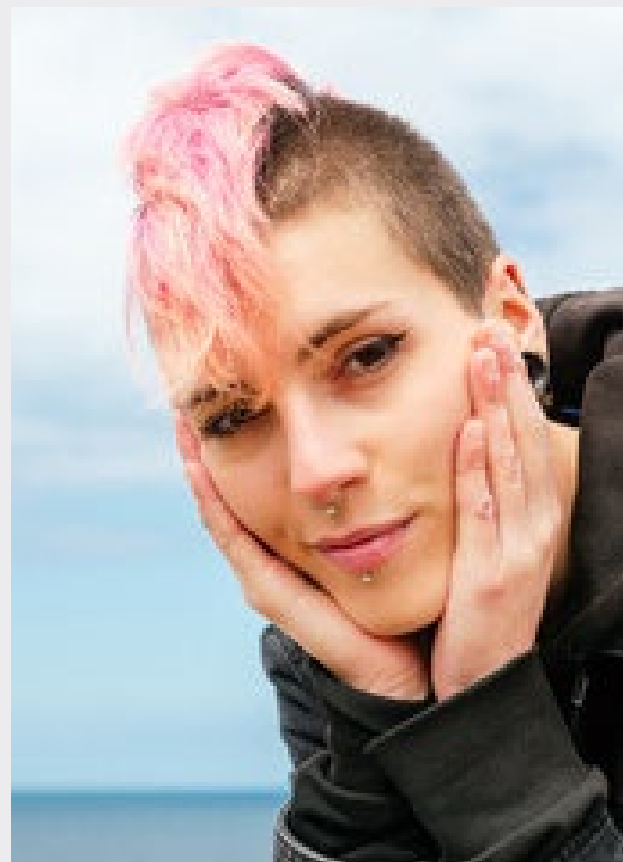


Communication is Key

An ongoing, meaningful connection between kids and (grand)parents is one of the most powerful factors in supporting teen mental and physical health.

Remember to be aware of what your teens are doing, where they are going, who they are with, and when they will be home.

Also remember – **Know when to let go!** Rules don't need to cover every aspect of a teen's life, such as **fashion choices and hairstyles.**



A well-behaved child isn't always an emotionally-well child. And an emotionally-well child isn't always well behaved.

– *Eli Harwood (aka the Attachment Nerd), Therapist*



Communication Tips for all Ages

- **Say what you mean.** Mean what you say.
- Keep sentences short and simple.
- Focus on **what to do** rather than what not to do. *For example, try saying “Slow down and walk” instead of “Stop running!”*
- Use **open communication**. Encourage your grandchildren to discuss their feelings.
- Talk **with** children, not **at** them.
- **Remember your “tone of voice.”**
- **Listen** – you can never listen too much.

Communication Tips for all Ages

OFFER CHOICES

- Offering limited choices instead of making demands can be very effective.
- Children often respond to choices when they will not respond to demands, especially when you follow the choice with, **“You decide”**.
- Choices should be respectful and should focus attention on the needs of the situation. For example, at bedtime you could ask: *“Would you rather brush your teeth or put on your pajamas first – you decide”*.

Offering Choices

Make sure the choices are acceptable to you.

- If you ask a yes or no question and you aren't willing to accept "no" as the answer, you did not provide appropriate choices.
- Adding, "You decide," after a choice is very empowering. It adds emphasis to the fact that the child has a choice.
- If your child doesn't want either choice or wants to do something else that is acceptable that is fine. If it is not, say "That isn't one of the choices." And then repeat the choices and say, "You decide".

Don't offer choices if there aren't any.

(For example, handwashing, holding hands while crossing the street, wearing a bike helmet when riding a bike, etc.)



FLIP IT

When something triggers us, we are prone to “**Flip our Lid**” which means the Prefrontal Cortex of our brain has a very poor connection with the Midbrain, and we’re not able to access the logical, problem-solving part of our brain. Our emotions are overriding our ability to think clearly.

Four supportive steps to help young children learn about their feelings, gain self-control, and reduce challenging behavior:

- 1. Feelings:** Gently talk with children about their feelings and what you are seeing and hearing as a result of their emotions. Help children identify the root of the feeling causing the behavior.
- 2. Limits:** Remind children of the positive limits and expectations you have for their behavior. Loving and simple limits help surround children with a sense of consistency, safety, and trust.
- 3. Inquiries:** Encourage children to think about solutions to their challenges. Ask questions that promote problem-solving and healthy coping skills. Inquiries invite children to think, learn, and gain self-control.
- 4. Prompts:** Provide creative cues, clues, and suggestions for children having difficulty problem-solving. Enthusiastic, bright ideas can lead the way to better problem-solving skills.



FAMILY TIME

- Be sure to plan regular family fun time and one on one time with the children.
- This builds a foundation of connections.
- Time is not something to be filled but should be freed so understanding can occur.



REMEMBER

Children never ever **CHOOSE** the meltdown, or any anxiety related behavior, in the same way that YOU would never ever choose to have a meltdown in front of your family, colleagues, or friends!

HELP FOR YOU:

When you feel unsure about a child's behavior or how to handle a situation, you can call or email for consultation:

Oklahoma Warmline at 888-574-5437 or warmline@health.ok.gov.



ENGAGING & CONNECTING WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH



EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHAMPION

“Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.”

Rita Pierson, Educator



ENGAGING & CONNECTING WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

- A close relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is mutually beneficial when it comes to the health and well-being of both.
- Grandparents provide acceptance, patience, love, stability, wisdom, fun, and support for their grandchildren.
- This, in turn, has positive effects on a child's well-being.

Christina Pay, USU Extension Assistant Professor, "Cultivating a Close Relationship with Grandparents"





TRADITIONAL ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS

Historian Role

- Tells stories (sometimes using pictures) about themselves, relatives, and family traditions.
- Shares old family recipes.
- Shares newspaper clippings and scrapbooks.
- Creates a family tree that children can add onto as they grow older.

Mentor Role

- Doing things together (for example, reading a book, playing a game, gardening, woodworking.)
- Planning outings or trips.
- Keeping up with the latest trends or interests of your grandchildren.
- Giving your grandchildren time without outside distractions.



GRANDPARENT TYPES

- **Formal grandparent:** follows what are believed to be the appropriate guidelines for the grandparenting role, which includes providing occasional services and maintaining an interest in the grandchild, but not becoming overly involved.
- **Fun seeker:** emphasizes the leisure aspects of the role and primarily provides entertainment for the grandchild.
- **Surrogate parent:** takes over the caretaking role with the child.
- **Reservoir of family wisdom:** (usually a grandfather) the head of the family who dispenses advice and resources but also controls the parent generation.
- **Distant figure:** has infrequent contact with the grandchildren, appearing only on holidays and special occasions.

Susan Krauss Whitbourne, PHD, ABPP, "Five Types of Grandparents and How They Shape Our Lives"



HELPFUL TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

www.HelpGuide.org

No matter how much you love your grandchildren, raising them comes with many challenges as well as rewards. These guidelines can help you succeed at parenting the second time around.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings.** It's important to acknowledge and accept what you're feeling, both positive and negative. These feelings don't mean that you don't love your grandchildren.
- 2. Take care of yourself.** Eat healthy, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. Make time for activities you enjoy and find someone you can talk to about what you're going through.
- 3. Realize your grandchildren will have mixed feelings too.** Moving to a new home is never easy. When children are dealing with the loss of regular contact with their parent(s), the move is even harder. Their feelings may come out with aggressive or inappropriate behavior, or they may withdraw and push you away.



HELPFUL TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

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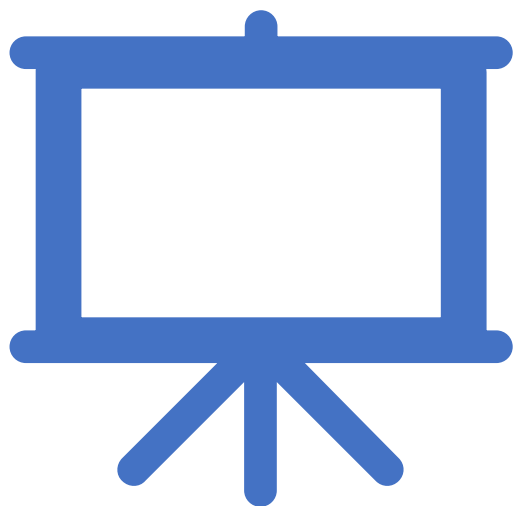
- 4. Focus on creating a stable environment.** While it will take your grandkids time to adjust to their new living arrangement, there are steps you can take to make the transition easier. Above all, your grandchildren need to feel secure.
- 5. Encourage open and honest communication.** Communicating openly and honestly with your grandchildren is one of the best things you can do to help them cope with their new situation. It's especially important to take the time to **really listen to your grandkids**. In this difficult time, they need an adult they can go to.
- 6. Encourage contact with parents.** It is not always possible for children to remain in contact with their parents, and at times, it may not be in a child's best interest. But in general, it is healthy for your grandchildren to maintain relationships with their parents.

HelpGuide.org by M. Smith and J. Segal



SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS

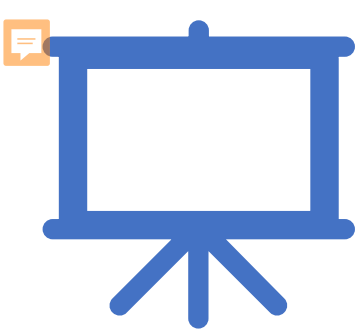
What is “Screen Time”



Screen time describes the amount of time spent watching or engaging with digital media on a screen including:

- Phones
- Tablets
- Computers
- Game consoles
- Television

Scrolling through social networks or emails on your phone is screen time. A child playing a game on a tablet is screen time.



Too much screen time can affect a child's health.

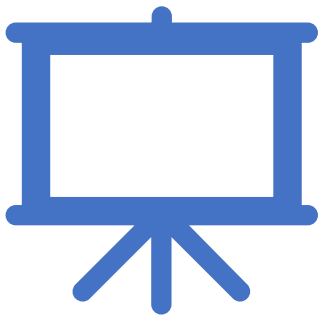
Sitting and watching a screen leads to reduced physical activity.

TV commercials and other screen ads lead to unhealthy food choices.

Screen time increases your child's risk for obesity.

Too much screen time can lead to poor posture.

Excessive screen time can strain your eyes and lead to retina damage.

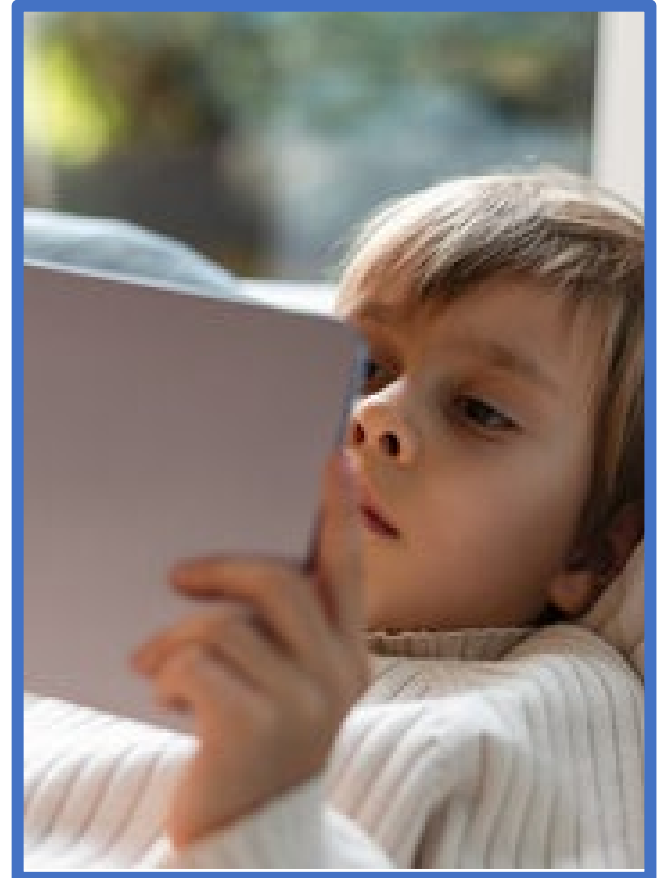


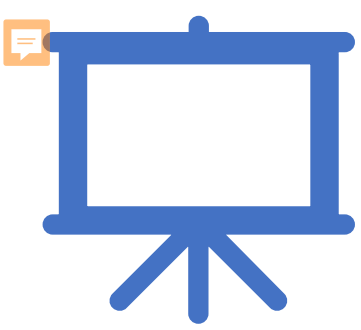
Screen time can affect a child's social skills.

- Excessive screen time can impair a child's social skills development.
- It reduces face-to-face interaction, which is important for learning non-verbal cues, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.

Cognitive issues can be associated with too much screen time.

- Excessive screen time can impair children's attention span, creativity, and learning abilities.
- It can potentially contribute to developmental delays or learning disorders.





How does excessive screen time impact a child's sleep?

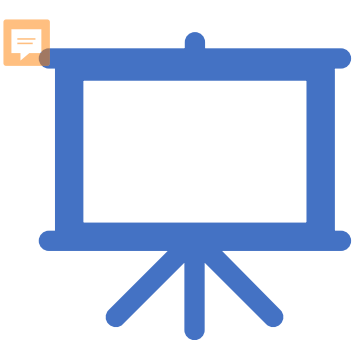
- Increased screen time, particularly before bed, can disrupt sleep patterns and make it harder for children to fall asleep.
- **The research is clear:** when children and teens have screens in their bedrooms, it interferes with their sleep. The light emitted by those devices is like a wake-up call to the human brain. It prevents a hormone called melatonin from building up in the brain.

It's the nightly production of melatonin that enables us to fall asleep.

- The only thing allowed in a bedroom are things that don't have the potential to obstruct sleep. A phone has that ability, as does a computer, TV, pretty much anything with a screen.

Electronics and sleep do not go together.





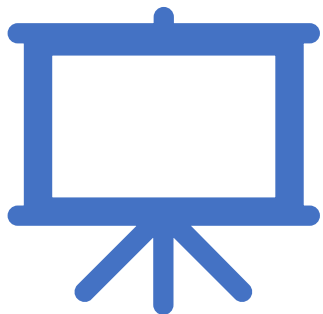
How can grandparents manage screen time and develop rules?

Manage screentime by:

- Setting clear boundaries.
- Promoting outdoor activities.
- Encouraging real-world social interactions.
- Using educational content to make screen time more productive.

Developing screentime rules – recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics by age:

- For newborns to 18 months – no screen time except for video chatting with family or friends.
- For young children 18 – 24 months screen time should be limited to watching short educational programming with a caregiver.
- For children 2 – 5 years, limit screen time to about one hour per day.
- For ages 6 and older, encourage healthy habits and limit activities that include screens.



Set limits on when screens will NEVER be allowed.



- **During family mealtime.** Eat at the table together and make mealtime fun. Help children develop the art of conversation.
- On family outings.
- While doing homework – unless a computer is needed for the assignment.
- **In the bedroom at night. (Screens off and removed from bedrooms 30-60 minutes before bedtime)**

Avoid using screens as pacifiers, babysitters, or to stop tantrums

To ensure quality screen time:

- Learn how to preview programs, games and apps before allowing your grandchild to view or play. Organizations such as Common Sense Media have programming ratings and reviews to help you determine what's appropriate for the child's age. <https://commonsensemedia.org>
- Seek out interactive options that engage the child.
- Use parental controls to block or filter internet content.
- Make sure your grandchild is close by during screen time so you can supervise.

TEACHING APPROPRIATE ONLINE BEHAVIOR

Online relationships and social media have become a major part of adolescent life. Experts suggest that it's OK for your teen to be a part of these worlds if he or she understands appropriate behavior.

- Explain what's allowed and what's not, such as sexting, cyberbullying, and sharing personal information online.
- **Teach your child not to send or share anything online that he or she would not want the entire world to see for eternity.**
- No matter how smart or mature you feel your child is, monitor his or her online and social media behavior. Your child is bound to make mistakes using media.
- You'll likely need to continue to guide, manage, and monitor your child's use of screens and media as he or she grows.



INTERNET SAFETY AND SECURITY

Remember these five simple rules:

1. If you wouldn't do it face to face, don't do it online.
2. Once it's online, you can't delete it.
3. Beware of random strangers bearing gifts.
4. Too much of a good thing can be bad for you.
5. Lock your online world like you lock your house or computer.

From Grand Magazine, Digital Safety Guide: What Grandparents Must Know and Do



Resources for Grandparents Caring for and Raising Grandchildren

<https://www.grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets> provides information about organizations in your state that offer support groups and services for grandparents caring for grandchildren.

<https://sunbeamfamilyservices.org/grg/> Sunbeam Family Services empowers grandparents by offering support groups, school supply assistance, holiday assistance, and other resources.

www.HelpGuide.org provides helpful tips for grandparents.

<https://okwarmline.org> The **Oklahoma Warmline** is a program for families, childcare providers, and other caregivers where callers can receive consultation and support. You can call: **888-574-5437** for consultation.

Oklahoma's Mental Health Lifeline – 988 – is a direct, three-digit lifeline that connects you with trained behavioral health professionals.