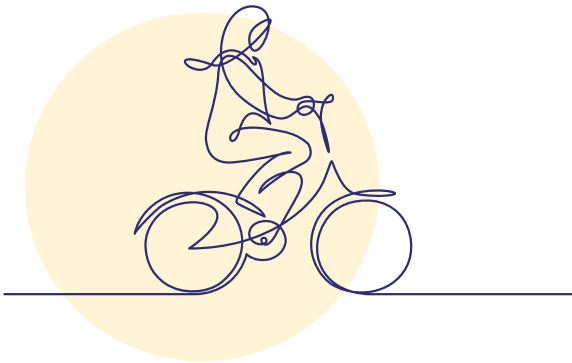


Summer wellness and screen time

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Helping children and teens thrive during summer break

Summer offers a wonderful opportunity for children and teens to rest, explore interests, build relationships and develop healthy habits. While screen time can offer entertainment, learning and connection, excessive use can interfere with sleep, physical activity, family interactions and overall well-being. The goal isn't to eliminate screens, but to maintain a healthy balance that supports your child's emotional, physical and social wellness.

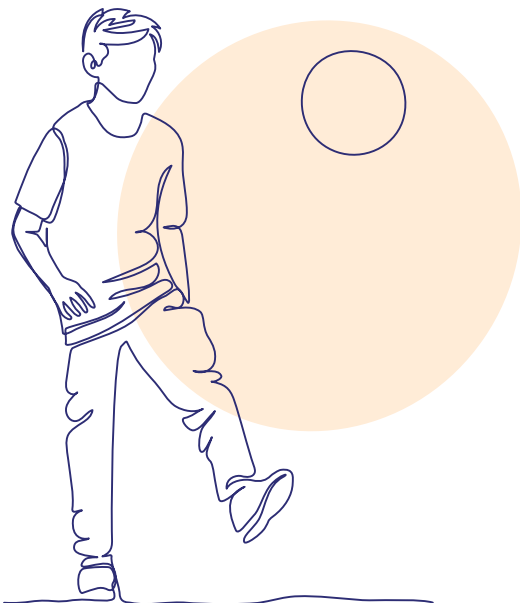


Finding balance, not perfection

Parents often carry a lot of guilt during the summer months. Instead of asking, "How much screen time is too much?" consider asking:

- Is my child getting enough sleep?
- Are they spending time outdoors?
- Are they staying physically active?
- Are they connecting with friends and family?
- Are they engaging in hobbies and creative activities?

If the answer to most of these questions is "yes," screen time may be fitting into a healthy overall routine.



Why summer wellness matters

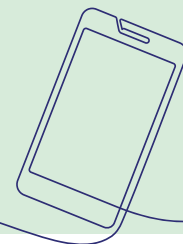
Without the structure of school, children and teens may experience:

- Changes in sleep schedules
- Increased boredom
- More screen use
- Less physical activity
- Fewer opportunities for social interaction

Creating simple routines can help support:

- Emotional regulation
- Physical health
- Social connection
- Self-confidence
- Healthy technology habits

Creating healthy screen time habits



1. Create screen time expectations together

Children and teens are more likely to follow rules they help create.

Consider discussing:

- When screens are allowed
- When screens are off-limits
- What types of content are appropriate
- How screen time fits into the family's values

Examples:

- Screens off during meals
- No devices one hour before bedtime
- Outdoor time before gaming
- Family activities come first

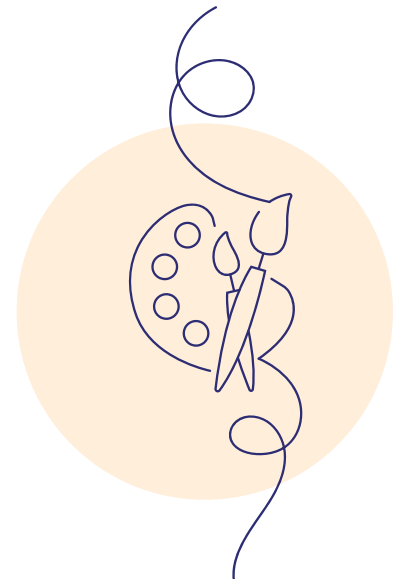


2. Prioritize physical health and mental wellness

Before recreational screen time, encourage:

- Adequate sleep
- Healthy meals
- Physical activity
- Outdoor time
- Social connection
- Learning and creativity

When these needs are met, screen time often becomes easier to manage.



3. Encourage quality over quantity

Not all screen time is the same.

Consider whether your child is:

- Learning something new
- Creating content
- Connecting with others
- Solving problems
- Exploring interests

Examples of positive screen use:

- Educational videos
- Digital art
- Coding
- Virtual museum tours
- Connecting with friends and family



The summer wellness formula

Try encouraging this daily balance:

60 minutes of movement

Ideas:

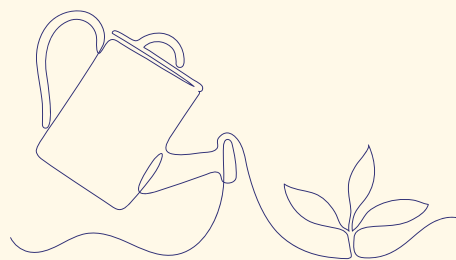
- Bike riding
- Swimming
- Walking
- Sports
- Dancing
- Playground activities



60 minutes outdoors

Ideas:

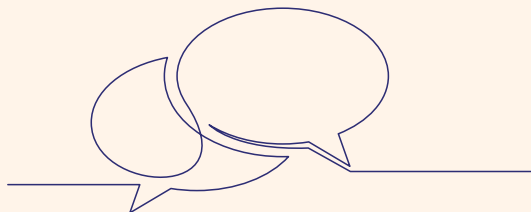
- Nature walks
- Gardening
- Reading outside
- Water play
- Outdoor games



Meaningful social connection

Ideas:

- Playdates
- Family activities
- Community events
- Phone calls with relatives

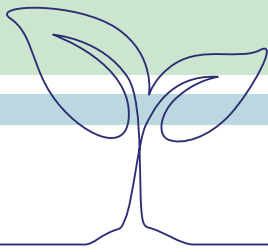


Creative time

Ideas:

- Art projects
- Music
- Writing
- Building
- Crafting





The “touch grass” rule

Before extended recreational screen time, encourage children to:

- Spend time outside
- Move their body
- Complete one responsibility
- Connect with another person

This simple strategy helps create balance without turning screens into a daily battle.

Protect sleep

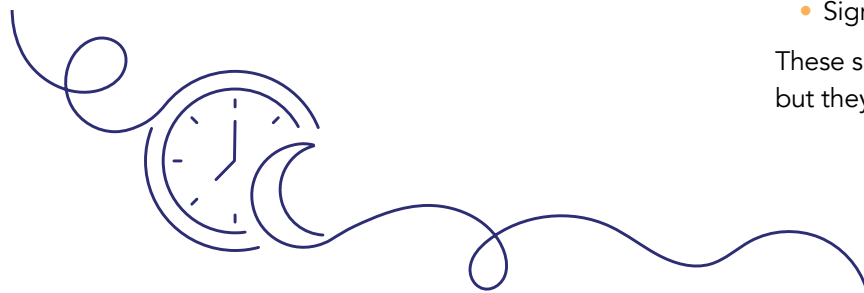
Sleep is one of the most important factors in a child’s mental wellness.

Helpful tips:

- Keep bedtimes relatively consistent
- Charge devices outside bedrooms when possible
- Avoid screens before bed
- Encourage calming nighttime routines

Children who sleep well often experience:

- Better moods
- Improved focus
- Greater emotional regulation
- Less irritability



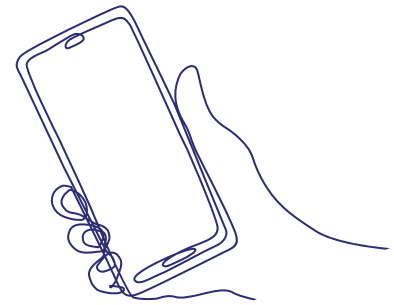
Supporting mental wellness

Summer can bring excitement, but it can also bring loneliness, anxiety, boredom or stress.

Check in regularly by asking:

- What was the best part of your day?
- What was challenging today?
- How are you feeling lately?
- Is there anything you need help with?

Small conversations often provide the biggest opportunities for connection.



Signs screen time may need attention

Consider adjusting screen habits if you notice:

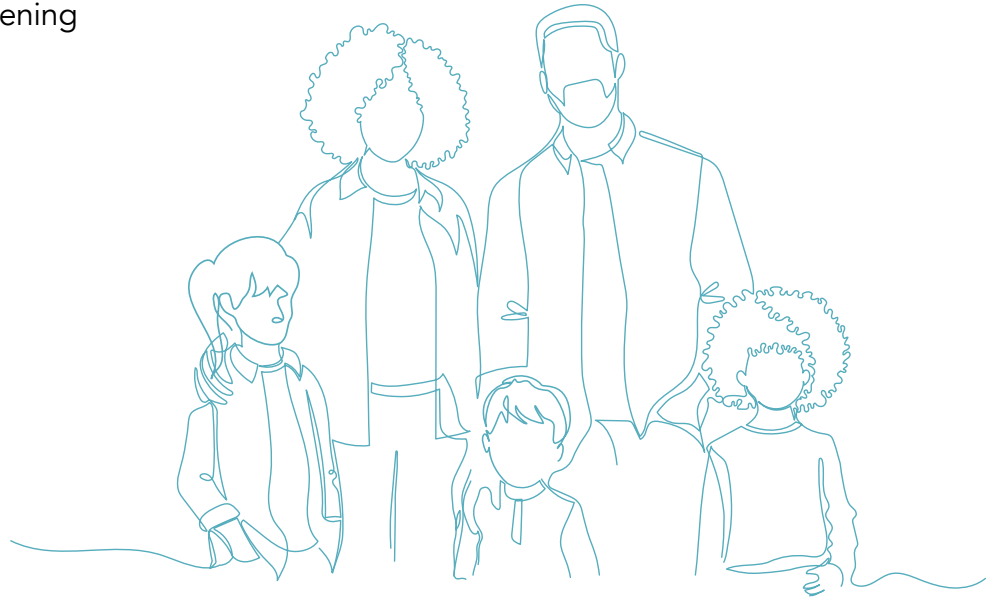
- Frequent sleep difficulties
- Increased irritability when devices are removed
- Loss of interest in other activities
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty completing responsibilities
- Significant mood changes related to screen use

These signs don’t necessarily mean there is a problem, but they may indicate that a healthier balance is needed.

Family summer wellness challenge

See how many you can complete together:

- Eat a meal outside
- Have a screen-free family evening
- Visit a park
- Take a family walk
- Play a board game
- Watch a sunset
- Try a new outdoor activity
- Read together
- Volunteer as a family
- Have a picnic



Parent reminder

Children and teens do not need perfect summers. They benefit most from connection, consistency, and opportunities to explore the world around them.

A successful summer isn't measured by how little screen time a child has. It's measured by whether they sleep well, stay active, build relationships, explore interests and make meaningful memories.

**Aim for balance, connection and flexibility.
Small, consistent habits can have a lasting impact on your child's wellness long after summer ends.**

Common
Thread

by  Wolfson Children's