



Screen Time

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Last week, Good Morning America ran a powerful story about the intense pull of screens and why having and enforcing limits are so important. Please do take some time to watch the following 3-minute film, with your children – you will be so glad you did.

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Family/48-hour-screen-time-experiment-kids-limits/story?id=53410728>

The film shows what happens when a couple allows their four children, ages 6 to 11, to have as much screen time as they want for 48 hours. During this time, the children often used more than one screen simultaneously. The producers counted all screens used when calculating times - so in three hours with two screens, was counted as six hours. The total time on screens for each of the children came to 16, 29, 35 and 46 hours over the course of the two days. On Sunday night when the experiment finished, the parents took their devices away leaving the children having major meltdowns.

Knowing which rules, limits, and guidelines to have can be confusing for parents, and then comes the work of implementing them consistently, which can be exhausting. Parents can sometimes be reticent to share their screen time rules; the fear of being judged as “lazy and too lax” or “overly controlling” prevents many of us from telling others the rules we are trying (I count having no rules as a type of rule setting).

The reporter for the Good Morning America story, Becky Worley, wrote an accompanying blog to her segment in which she reveals her own family rules:

“I have been covering and studying this issue (tech) for a long time. As a result, I am super strict with my 10-year-old twins: No screens at all during the week and only TV shows on the big screen on the weekends. No YouTube, no tablet games, no Xbox or PlayStation in our house. My two exceptions are planes and hospitals.”

And to my point, she adds:

“This is the first time I’m writing about what our family does because I don’t want to seem judgmental; there are a million different types of kids, family situations, and techniques for parenting.”

If the video motivated you to rethink the limits in your home, here is a free online tool to help which is put out by [American Association of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](http://www.aap.org). If you have rules, but they need a refresh, now could be that time.