



## iOS Screen Time

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This week, Apple announced that they will release a new software update (operating system iOS 12) which will include several much-needed functions in a tool named “Screen Time”. This tool helps parents control aspects of children’s time spent on phones and tablets. Google has similar controls for Android phones that can be managed through its [Family Link](#) app, but today I am writing about Apple Devices.

There has been much written about the need for technology manufacturers to add easy screen time parental controls to their devices. Until now, parents could manually put apps on their children’s phones to try to do things like this, but children are able to bypass the apps by disabling the VPN, or by other means. Therefore, Apple’s new functions are a big deal.

Screen Time will have many features, including a program that records time spent on various apps. Currently, if someone wants to know the amount of time, they have to download a third-party app. A colleague did this recently with the app called Moment to track his time. He was surprised by how much time he was on his phone and how frequently he was checking it just out of habit throughout the day. Now, this function will be installed automatically with the iOS update. Parents and children will be able to download activity reports from their “Family Sharing” account in iCloud. Knowing use patterns of various apps can help direct conversations about what individual behaviours need modification.

Screen Time will enable parents to set time limits for usage of individual apps, through the tool, “App Limits.” It will even notify children when their time is almost done. This warning can help our boys transition off their devices more calmly than being told to stop. As has been said before, “[Sleep is Supreme.](#)” In iOS 12 it will now be easier to set up bedtime parameters on children’s phones and tablets. Notifications are also a huge distraction, but with a new tool called “Downtime”, you will be able to easily control when notifications can be displayed and delivered to you (or to your child).

We continue to work with boys and parents to establish norms around tech and it’s great that technology is beginning to support these norms.