


OUR OFFICE CONTACTS:

SOUTH COUNTY OFFICE
9200 Watson Road, G-101
St. Louis, MO 63126
P. 314-544-3800

O'FALLON MO OFFICE
311 South Main
Suite 100
O'Fallon, MO 63366
P. 636-281-1990

UNION OFFICE
102 E. Springfield, Ste. 202
Union, MO 63084
P. 636-583-1800

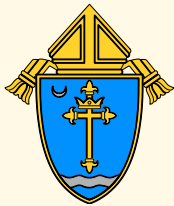
FLORISSANT OFFICE
1385 Harkee Drive
Florissant, MO 63031
P. 314-831-1533

WEST COUNTY OFFICE
498 Woods Mill Road
Manchester, MO 63011
P. 636-391-9966

HERCULANEUM OFFICE
1349 MCNUTT STREET,
63048
P. 636-638-2203

TROY, MO, OFFICE
#140 PROFESSIONAL PKWY,
63379
P. 636-528-5911

**BELLEFONTAINE
NEIGHBORS**
10235 Ashbrok Drive, 63137
P. 314-831-1533



Published by:
**Saint Louis Counseling
School Partnership
Program (SPP)**
9200 Watson Rd., Ste. G101
St. Louis, MO 63126
314-544-3800 phone
314-843-0552 fax
SaintLouisCounseling.org

School Tools

January 2020

Screen Time

Today's generation of children is growing up immersed in media. With screens virtually everywhere, controlling a child's screen time can be challenging. It also happens to be a favorite use of time for most of us, giving our brains a little rush every time we interact with our phones. Why is that a problem? Because it can consume us and distract us from other things that are important, like connecting with our families or doing our homework.

Many parents report having daily battles in their homes when it comes to getting kids off of their devices. If the same is true for you, you're not alone! It is the reality of modern society that kids spend a large amount of time in front of screens. The reason for that is because the part of a child's brain that has the ability to stop and think isn't fully developed, and therefore, the impulsive, reactive, and instant-gratification parts of the brain take over. So, when your child seems unreasonable or irrational when you want to talk about limiting their screen time—they are. Not because they want to be, but because they're wired to be. *Check out the recommendations for establishing age-appropriate screen times and ways you can disconnect to connect on this page.*

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommendations for Screen Time:

- **< 18 months:** Avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting.
- **18 to 24 months:** Parents can introduce media and watch it with their children to help them understand what they are seeing.
- **2 to 5 years:** Limit screen use to one hour per day. Co-viewing can help kids understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- **Ages 6 and older:** Place consistent limits on the time spent using screens, making sure it does not take the place of adequate sleep and physical activity.

Disconnect to Connect

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is concerned about our kids when it comes to screen time, and reports that too much or poor quality screen time has been linked to childhood obesity, irregular sleep schedules/shorter duration of sleep, behavioral problems, and issues with social skills.

Screen time should work within your family values and parenting style. When it is used thoughtfully and appropriately, we can all agree that screens can enhance daily life. But our hope as parents is to avoid thought-

less and constant overuse of screens that result in overtaking important activities, such as face-to-face interaction, family-time, outdoor-play, exercise, unplugged down-time, or sleep.

There are things that we can do to help our child feel supported while also keeping ourselves feeling like we have a sense of control. Supervision and communication are key. Maintaining a set of rules to help your child see that there are clear boundaries can help in the long-run. Designating screen-free times to-

gether—such as dinner time—or even screen-free spots at home (i.e., the bedroom) can help you emphasize that life isn't all about devices.

We help our kids navigate how to behave off-line, so it only makes sense that we would be involved in helping them navigate how to behave when they're online, or in front of screens. A one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work here, but consider applying the same rules you have to your child's real and virtual environments.