Device Setup & Parental Controls Guide

Step-by-step instructions for configuring parental controls on every major device and platform.

TIP Important: Parental controls are a safety net, not a substitute for ongoing conversation. Use these settings alongside regular family discussions about online safety.

iPHONE & iPAD (iOS Screen Time)

1 Open Settings > Screen Time

Tap 'Turn On Screen Time' and choose 'This is My Child's [Device]'

2 Set a Screen Time Passcode

Choose a 4-digit code DIFFERENT from the device unlock code. Store it somewhere safe. Your child should NOT know this code.

3 Configure Downtime

Settings > Screen Time > Downtime. Set hours when only approved apps work (e.g., 9pm-7am). Prevents late-night screen use.

4 Set App Limits

Settings > Screen Time > App Limits. Set daily limits per app category (Social Networking, Games, Entertainment). Recommended: 60 min/day for Social Networking.

5 Content & Privacy Restrictions

Settings > Screen Time > Content & Privacy Restrictions. Enable and set: iTunes & App Store Purchases > Require Password. Allowed Apps > turn off what's not appropriate. Content Restrictions > set Music, Podcasts, Movies, TV Shows to age-appropriate ratings.

6 Turn on Communication Limits

Control who children can communicate with during Screen Time and Downtime.

7 Check Location Settings

Settings > Privacy > Location Services. Review each app - most should be 'While Using App' or 'Never'. Disable for social media apps.

ANDROID PHONES & TABLETS (Family Link)

1 Set up Google Family Link

Download 'Google Family Link for Parents' on your device. Download 'Google Family Link for Children & Teens' on your child's device. Create a supervised Google account.

2 Approve App Downloads

In Family Link: your child's app download requests appear on your phone. You approve or deny each one. Enable 'Require Approval for All Apps'.

3 Set Daily Screen Time Limits

Family Link app > your child's name > Daily Limit. Set total device time and schedule bedtime lockout.

4 Review Location

Family Link shows your child's device location in real time.

5 Lock the Device Remotely

You can lock your child's Android device remotely from the Family Link app when it's time to stop.

6 Configure SafeSearch

In Family Link: Settings > Google Search > SafeSearch > Filter. Also go to YouTube > in Family Link disable YouTube and use YouTube Kids app instead.

WINDOWS PC (Family Safety)

1 Sign in with a Microsoft Family Account

Go to account.microsoft.com/family. Sign in and add your child's Microsoft account as a family member. Choose 'Child' role.

2 Ensure Your Child Has a Standard Account

Search > Settings > Accounts > Family & Other Users > Add account. Set as 'Standard User', NOT Administrator.

3 Set Screen Time Limits

account.microsoft.com > Family > your child's name > Screen Time. Set daily limits and a schedule.

4 Enable Content Filters

Microsoft Family Safety > Content Filters. Set web browsing to 'Allow Approved Websites Only' for younger children, or 'Filter Inappropriate Websites' for older teens.

5 Review Spending

Set spending limits for the Microsoft Store to prevent unauthorized purchases.

6 Activity Reports

Family Safety sends weekly activity reports showing which apps were used, websites visited, and screen time totals.

MAC (Screen Time on macOS)

1 Create a Child Account

System Settings > Users & Groups > Add Account. Set as 'Standard' user. This child account should NOT have admin rights.

2 Enable Screen Time for the Child

System Settings > Screen Time > select child's name > Turn On.

3 Set a Screen Time Passcode

System Settings > Screen Time > Use Screen Time Passcode. This prevents your child from changing the settings.

4 Configure Downtime and App Limits

Same as iOS - set Downtime hours and per-app time limits.

5 Content Restrictions

Screen Time > Content & Privacy. Enable and set age-appropriate content ratings for movies, music, and apps.

6 Communication Limits

Set who can be contacted from the child's account during Screen Time and Downtime hours.

CHROMEBOOK (Google Family Link)

1 Set up a Supervised Google Account

Create a Google account for your child at accounts.google.com > For my child. Download Family Link app on your phone.

2 Manage Apps and Extensions

Family Link > Manage > Apps. Approve or block Chrome extensions and Android apps on the Chromebook.

3 Set Screen Time

Family Link app > Screen Time. Set daily limit and bedtime schedule.

4 Safe Browsing Settings

Family Link > Settings > Google Chrome > Manage Sites. Add approved sites and block categories.

GAMING CONSOLES

Nintendo Switch: System Settings > Parental Controls > Use the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app. PlayStation 5: Settings > Family Management > create child account. Xbox: account.microsoft.com/family > Xbox settings - set content restrictions and spending limits. All consoles support time limits, content ratings enforcement, and communication controls.

NOTE

Set a reminder to review these settings every 3 months. Platforms update their settings, and your child's needs will change as they grow. Parental controls should evolve with your family.