Khan Academy Kids

Purposeful Screen Time in the Classroom

Talking points for conversations with families, communities, and school leadership

Before you use this

These are starting points, not scripts to read verbatim. Adjust to your own voice and your school's specific policies. If a conversation moves toward a formal complaint, a board meeting, or media attention, loop in your communications team before responding further.

The distinction worth repeating

Most of this conversation gets easier when you separate two different things people mean by "screen time":

- **Recreational screen time** — entertainment, social media, unstructured device use. This is where most of the public concern (and most of the research on harm) is concentrated.
- **Purposeful instructional screen time** — a specific tool, tied to a specific skill, used with a teacher present.

Naming that distinction early keeps the conversation from becoming "screens: yes or no."

For Teachers—Individual Conversations

(Parent email, conference, hallway check-in)

- "I want every minute of screen time in my classroom to be earning its place, same as I'd expect from any worksheet or activity."
- "[Child] isn't watching passively. They're [answering, reading]; I'm circulating and engaging."
- "I'm happy to walk you through exactly what we use and why, anytime."
- If the concern is really about school or district policy, redirect warmly: "That's a bigger conversation than my classroom, let's loop in [administrator]."

For Administrators—Group Settings

(Staff meetings, community forums, school board comment periods, district-wide messaging)

- Open by naming the concern directly, not defensively: "We know families are paying close attention to screen time right now, and that's a reasonable thing to want clarity on."
- State the standard you hold the district to, not just a defense of the status quo: what counts as "purposeful," who decides, how it's reviewed.
- Acknowledge the broader landscape honestly rather than dismissing it — several states and districts have moved to limit or ban classroom screen time in 2026. Naming that you're aware of the trend, and explaining your own district's reasoning, lands better than acting like the concern is coming from nowhere.
- Avoid absolute claims ("screens never hurt learning," "there's no downside"). The credible position is "used well, this is a net positive" — not "screens are categorically fine."

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