Grades 3–5

BEFORE YOU CHANGE ANYTHING

This is when the attention economy finds your son

He is not on it for no reason. Games and videos are built to be good company. Blocking the activity does not remove what it was meeting.

A setting is only half of it. The skill to teach now is noticing when an app is using him. That only comes from talking about it, not from a limit alone.

And it changes with age. Rules work well at this age and work less well as he gets older. Bringing him into the decision now is practice for when it will be the only thing that works.

TRY THIS

The house YOUR WIFI

The network, not the device. Pause it and everything on the wifi stops together.

WHY IT MATTERS

Tweens aged 8 to 12 average 5.5 hours of recreational screen time a day. Charging outside bedrooms is the habit to start now, before there is a phone to argue about.

TRY THIS

- Make him a profile and assign his devices
- Schedule a pause 30 to 50 minutes before bed
- Console stops earlier than the homework laptop
- Shift the weekend by an hour, not four

Covers every device on your wifi. Misses anything on cellular data.

The school account BROWNING.EDU · GOGUARDIAN PARENT

Follows the login, not the laptop. Browning filters it, and you can see it.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is when boys make their first accounts and first meet content chosen by an algorithm rather than by them. Looking at it together teaches the question you want him asking alone: who made this, and why?

TRY THIS

- Install GoGuardian Parent, sign in with the email on file
- Open it with him, not quietly and then at dinner
- Read for patterns, not incidents

Covers schoolwork on the Browning account. Misses the machine itself, since this follows the login.

The personal account FAMILY APPLE ID · SCREEN TIME

His Apple ID or Google account. This is what Downtime, limits, and app approvals attach to.

WHY IT MATTERS

Forty-two percent of children have a phone by age 10, and the research supports waiting. Browning recommends no peer group texting before Grade 8. Delaying works when families in a grade decide together.

TRY THIS

- Screen Time or Family Link on the family tablet
- A passcode he does not know
- Downtime on, with Block at Downtime
- Turn off notifications for anything that is not a person

Covers the shared tablet or laptop. Misses what he uses at a friend's house.

WHAT NONE OF IT SOLVES

Settings buy you a structure. They do not have the conversation. Here is how to open it, before you change anything.

Say what is changing, and why
"The wifi goes off at nine thirty on school nights. Not because I caught you at something. Because I want you to sleep."

Agree in advance on exceptions
"Ask me before, not after."

Let him argue, and mean it
"Tell me what you would set instead, and why. If it is reasonable, we will use yours."

Then write it down
Turn this page over, read it with him, change what does not fit, and sign it.

Sources: Common Sense Media · Wait Until 8th · Browning Reclaiming Focus Initiative

FAMILY MEDIA AGREEMENT

Grades 3–5

Building Research Habits & Media Literacy
focus.browning.edu

Mark this page up. Connect: what already describes your household. **Extend:** what would stretch it further. **Challenge:** what does not work, or is missing.

Take Care

- I will take care of classroom and family devices and report anything broken or lost.
- I understand devices belong to the family unless I paid for them myself.
- I will not download apps or change settings without permission.

Stay Safe

- I will not create accounts without my family's permission.
- I will not share my full name, address, school name, or photos without permission.
- I will not share my passwords with anyone except a parent.
- I will tell a parent immediately if anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable online.
- I know some people online pretend to be someone they're not.

Think First

- Before I share anything online, I will ask: would I be okay if everyone I know saw this?
- I will not spread rumors, gossip, or mean content about anyone online.
- I know that not everything I read or see online is true — I will check before I believe it.
- I understand AI can create fake photos, videos, and voices of real people.
- I will give credit when I use someone else's work or ideas.

Stay Balanced

- I will help my family set screen time limits and then follow them.
- I will not use screens in my bedroom.
- I will choose what I watch — not let YouTube or another app choose for me.
- I will have at least one hour of physical activity or outdoor time each day.
- Devices charge outside my bedroom every night.

Communicate Openly

- I will tell my parents what apps, games, and websites I use.
- I will tell a parent if I see something online that upsets me or doesn't seem right.
- I will be honest about how much time I've spent on screens.

Connecting Screen Commitment

- We will pick a film or show together at least once a week and watch it as a family.
- I will not use a device when we're eating together as a family.
- When I game, I will prefer games I can play with a friend or family member in the room.

In exchange, our family agrees to

- To listen to what interests him online and engage with his world rather than dismiss it.
- To talk with him about our concerns before saying no.
- To help him find shows, games, and content that are worth his time.
- To keep devices in shared spaces and charge them outside bedrooms for everyone.
- To model the screen habits we want him to have.
- To take media literacy seriously — help him question what he sees online.
- To use Apple Screen Time or Google Family Link to support healthy defaults.

Isolating screen warning signs — watch for these

- He is watching other people play games (YouTube gaming, Twitch) instead of playing himself.
- He is watching for long periods without choosing what comes next.
- He reaches for a screen immediately after school or whenever he has free time.
- He is reluctant to stop and becomes irritable when asked to.

Tell us what you changed

Scan to send your Connect, Extend, and Challenge notes. Nothing attributable to a student or a household leaves the room.

Student signature & date

Parent or guardian signature & date

Revisit: September and February each year

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