



Getting Ready for Screen-Free Saturdays

A checklist for making your Screen-Free Saturdays (SFS) fun and successful!

- Set expectations early and often:** At least for the first few weeks, it will be helpful to set expectations on Thursday and Friday: "Remember, in a day or two we'll be doing Screen-Free Saturday!"

- Plan together:** What activities will you do? Let every member of your family contribute their ideas. And keep a couple in your back pocket, in case things are weather- (or attitude-) dependent! As you're planning, think about the different types of screen-free time you'd like to have, like:
 - **Schedule whole family time:** Plan a bunch of things you'd like to do together. Revisit old traditions that may have slipped through the cracks, or start new ones. One family we know decided to try a new bread recipe each Saturday; another remembered that they used to always take a family nap!
 - **Schedule different types of together time:** Not everything needs to be done as a whole family. There can be alone time and also smaller configurations. For instance, in a family with one parent and two kids, schedule 1:1 time with each child while the other plays alone. Many families probably don't have the time to pair up like that during the week!
 - **Schedule alone time:** Independent projects are important for everyone of all ages! For very young kids who are less independent, consider making a [YES space](#) and filling it with open-ended objects like tupperware, boxes, blankets, or blocks.
 - **Schedule unscheduled time:** It's totally OK to [do nothing](#) on Screen-Free Saturdays! It's also OK to have the kids help with chores, cooking, and other things that have been put off from the busy, screen-heavy week.

Activity Highlight: READING!

"I can't imagine a single Screen-Free Saturday without reading. With older kids like mine, we all set aside time to read to ourselves. But read-alouds for all ages (younger and my kids' ages) is a special time for us too. At this moment, I'm reading to my daughter while my husband reads to our son, but there have been times when I have read books to both kids at the same time, or when we've reversed the parent-child dyad. Reading is an all-weather activity, which makes it ideal for every Saturday."

-Rinny Yourman J.D., Washington, D.C.

Check out these resources:

[100 Screen-Free Reading-Related Activities](#)

and our [2020 Screen-Free Week Children's Book List](#)

Activity Highlight: KICK IT OFF!

Consider a Friday night kickoff (like a family dinner) and/or a special family activity to get the ball rolling! Maybe it's all cuddling in the same bed in the morning or it's digging out an old board game. Re-spark an old tradition or start a new one to set the tone for your screen-free day!

- Going somewhere?** If you must leave the house or you are traveling to an unfamiliar park for a family hike (while being careful to engage in social distancing), consider printing or writing down any directions you might need. Using your phone to navigate seems innocent, but think about how many notifications might pop up once you've put in your passcode!
- Print your recipes:** Yum! If you're using your device for recipes, look them up and write them down the night before, so you don't interrupt your screen-free flow. *Bonus activity idea:* Create a cookbook of all of your SFS cooking projects to look back on and repeat!

- Let your people know that you're going Screen-Free:** If there are people who might get anxious if they text or otherwise e-contact you and don't hear back from you for 24 hours, let them know ahead of time you are going unplugged. If you have a landline, text them the day before that they can reach you on the landline. Need to stay in touch? Check out the [Brick Method](#) to set up an auto-responder for iOS and [Do Not Disturb](#) for Android.
- Honestly, just turn it off:** It will be easiest if everyone involved in your family just turns off their phone for the day. Psychologist Sherry Turkle's research shows that even the presence of our phones is distracting. Plus, if you pick up your phone to check the weather, time, directions, or a recipe, you're likely to see a whole mess of notifications! Even if you don't check them, your brain will be thinking about them. *Bonus activity idea:* [Make your own Screen-Free Sleeve to create healthy separation between your brain and your device!](#)
- Plan your transition back to screens:** On Saturday night or Sunday morning, cap off the day with a special family activity, as a slow transition back to screens. Maybe it's a Saturday night family movie night (my family loves to watch home movies from when we were younger) or a Sunday breakfast where you talk about your plan for the week. Make it yours!

Unplug to...



...the possibilities are
endless!

Find more tools at
[screenfree.org/resources](https://www.screenfree.org/resources)

www.screenfree.org/saturdays