

ScreenTime Monitoring: Ultimate Guide to Parental Controls

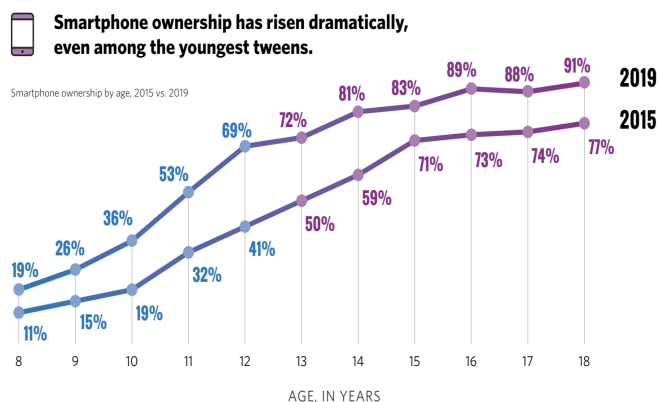
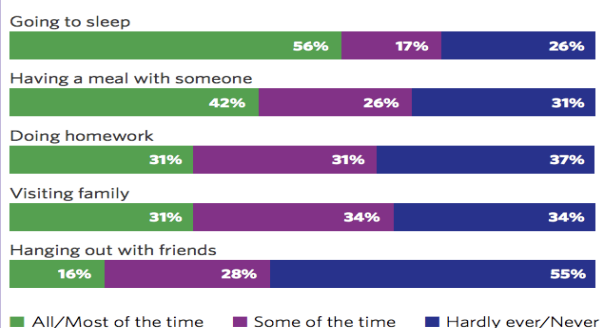
In our previous [newsletters](#) we highlighted the importance of monitoring screen time and setting limits for children and adults. In this edition of the Digital Wellness Newsletter we'd like to focus on resources to help parents monitor mobile device usage in the home. In the chart below (**Smartphone Ownership**) the number of tweens having their own smartphone has risen dramatically in the past few years. Equally important, children between the ages of 13-17 are reporting they have a difficult time putting away their phones when going to sleep, doing homework and having a meal (**Silencing Digital Devices**).



As a result, we'd like to explore a variety of resources available to parents to assist in managing and monitoring the amount of screen time usage in the home. Before implementing any of these monitoring options, we encourage you to talk with your child about device usage and as a family complete the [Family Media Plan](#) to better understand how your child is using their mobile device and what apps and content they are viewing.

FIGURE G. Silencing Digital Devices, 2018

Among 13- to 17-year-olds with a cellphone, percent who say they turn off, silence, or put away their phones when:



Figuring out what kind of parental control is best is entirely based on your own family's needs. Some families can get by with simple, free browser settings to filter inappropriate content. Some families need help clamping down on screen time. Some folks are cool with spot-checks on their kids' devices. Wherever you are in your search, the resources below can help you make sense of the wide array of options for managing your family's devices. As a reminder for students in grades 6-12 who take home a school issued Chromebook, these devices include Internet filters to block inappropriate websites when connected to any WiFi network, at school or at home. Please visit [ISD 728 Web Filtering](#) for more information.

- [Circle Home Plus](#) is a device and subscription service that pairs with your existing router and lets you pause access to the internet, create time limits, and add content filters to all devices on your home network (including Wi-Fi devices), plus manage phones and tablets outside the home.
- [OpenDNS](#) is a download that works with your existing router (the device that brings the internet into your home) to filter internet content.
- A full-featured, third-party parental control service such as [Qustodio](#) or [NetNanny](#) will give you a lot of control over all of your kid's devices (the ones they use at home as well as their phones). These can be pricey (especially if you have several kids to monitor), but the cost includes constant device monitoring, offering you visibility into how kids are using their devices.
- To keep tabs on your tween or teen's phone, your best bet is to download an app such as [Bark](#) or [WebWatcher](#), which monitor text messages, social networks, emails, and other mobile functions. These are especially helpful if you're concerned about potentially risky conversations or iffy topics your kid might be engaging in.

Click [HERE](#) to view the full guide or visit the [Common Sense Media](#) Screen Time website.