

School Event Guide

screen-
free
week



fairplay
childhood beyond brands



Designing Your School's Screen-Free Week

Thank you for your interest in planning an event for Screen-Free Week! You're amazing and we love you for stepping up to support this global celebration.

Here's some information to get you started.

WHAT IS SCREEN-FREE WEEK?

Screen-Free Week is an annual, global celebration held the first week in May, when families, libraries, schools, and even whole communities swap digital entertainment for the joys of life beyond the screen.

Screen-Free Week is a fun way to reduce dependence on digital entertainment, and a chance for kids and grownups to power down and reconnect with the world around them.

WHO AND WHERE?

Anyone can take part in Screen-Free Week by simply [pledging to participate](#) in whatever way makes sense to them.

The goal of Screen-Free Week isn't to get students to totally turn off ALL screens forever. It's simply to encourage them to try living without entertainment screens for as much of the week as they are comfortable and to evaluate their long-term relationship with technology.

The most exciting and memorable Screen-Free Week for students is one that includes a school week's worth of events and activities, either during lunch/recess or, better yet, after school.

However, your school's celebration can be as big or small as you like. If you can't organize a whole week of activities, we'd suggest hosting just one event and celebrating **Screen-Free Saturday**.



OPTIONS FOR YOUR WEEK

You can organize your Screen-Free week however you like. Here are some suggestions from past participants.

Lunch/recess/school day ideas

- Book readings by the principal or other unexpected staff ,(P.E. teacher, school nurse, local celebrity, etc.) or read-ins, (where teachers and children enjoy silent reading during a break.)
- Teacher and student talent shows, open mic events, or student poetry readings.
- Arts and crafts projects like painting a mural or sidewalk chalk drawing.
- Activities that calm the mind like a short group meditation session, or some gentle yoga stretches.
- Talks or educational handouts on the basics of digital/media literacy.

After hours ideas

- Author reading, used book sale, book character parade, or a celebration for [Children's Book Week](#) (the same week as Screen-Free Week!)
- Physical activity like hip-hop dance workshop, soccer tournament, fun run, obstacle course, four square tournament, archery, yoga, tae kwon do, kickball, bowling, ice skating, roller skating, swim night, dance party, Zumba, baseball game, color war, relay games, parents v. students game.
- Outdoors options like a farmers' market meet-up, community park visit, bird walk, beach event, picnic, campfire, gardening, yard cleanup, nature talk, or playground meet-up.
- Family bingo night, family game night, family trivia night, family scavenger hunt, family hike, family craft night.



- Community service projects like school fundraisers or giving back night.
- Films screenings for middle or high school students of *The Social Dilemma*, (on Netflix) *Screenagers*, or *Celling Your Soul* (and its accompanying one-week No App For Life challenge.)

Around town ideas

Take advantage of what your community offers and collaborate with local organizations. (See our [community organizer's guide](#) for more information.)

- Obtain reduced or free admission to local indoor swimming pools, the local Y or recreation center, restaurants, museums, community theaters, bowling alleys, skating rinks, and more.
- Ask local parks and nature centers to lead a hike, gardening activity, outdoor recreation activity, or nature immersion experience.
- Check out your communities' event calendar(s). If there are inexpensive, accessible, and screen-free events already being offered the first week in May, see if those organizations would like to partner with your school and make the Screen-Free Week celebration community-wide!

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR WEEK

You have many options for structuring your week. Here are two ideas we like.

Organize a different theme for each day of Screen-Free Week. For example: host a *reading* event on Monday, an *exercise* event on Tuesday, an *outdoors* event on Wednesday, etc.

You could also focus on a **single theme for the entire week**, whether it be the outdoors, reading, mental health, etc. For example for an outdoors theme you could plan a school grounds planting/landscaping event on Monday, a sidewalk chalk competition on Tuesday, and so on.



ALTERNATIVES TO A FULL WEEK

For those schools unable to plan an entire week of Screen-Free Week activities, here are some alternatives other schools have used:

- Plan **just one screen-free activity** during Screen-Free Week and encourage local organizations, (especially libraries) and businesses to offer other free activities or reduced rate options, independent of the school (in other words, no school representatives attend).
- Encourage students to **fill out [pledge cards](#) to go screen-free** during Screen-Free Week, (provide a stack of cards in a common area or create a pledge board where they can pledge via a post-it note) and then provide one big blowout Screen-Free Week activity, (like a dance party, student talent show) on Friday evening or the weekend.
- Try **going screen-free during the school day!** This experiment took place in a school in Kenai, Alaska, with positive results.
- Encourage students to **participate in Screen-Free Week at home**, with some sort of prize, award, raffle, or certificate of achievement for participants. Send students home with a [letter of explanation](#) to parents about and [a pledge card](#). Both are free downloads in our [Screen-Free resource library](#).

PRE-EVENT EDUCATION

Talk to students before and after Screen-Free Week to get them thinking more deeply about the benefits of a week without screens.

- **Before Screen-Free Week**, encourage students to think (in age-appropriate ways) about the benefits of Screen-Free Week, what it might feel like to step away from entertainment screens for a week, what they think would be good substitutes for screen entertainment, and how they can deal with the temptation to use a screen during the week.



- [After Screen-Free Week](#), assess the experience. How was it challenging, how was it rewarding, and how might it affect their future behavior? When they have free time, will they automatically reach for screen entertainment, or will they be able to carve out screen-free time for themselves on a daily basis?

RESOURCES TO MAKE THIS EASY

Feel free to access any of the following free resources in our multilingual [Screen-Free library for school organizers](#):

- [Sample flyer](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Sample parent letter and permission slip](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Pledge cards](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Activity logs](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Certificate of achievement](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Family guide](#) – in English and Spanish
- [101 screen-free activity guide](#) – in English and Spanish
- [Children's books about going screen-free](#)

SPREAD THE WORD

Once you have your Screen-Free week planned, please register it at screenfree.org/events. Tracking our global participation is how we continue to keep Screen-Free Week free and open to all!

To promote your event, again take advantage of screenfree.org/resources to access press release templates, social media wording, event logos, and more. Email us at screenfreeweek@fairplayforkids.org if you need help.

Most importantly, have fun!

For more information about kids and screens, visit our website at www.screenfree.org, or our partner websites at www.fairplayforkids.org and www.screentimenetwork.org.