

# Keep screen time in check

Do you worry that your child spends too much time in front of a screen? Do you wonder how he could best use technology? Consider this advice for helping him to balance screen time with other activities and to make the most of the time he does spend on electronics.

**Aim for a mix.** Together, look for ways to balance screen time with schoolwork, active play, and



family time. Make rules about where and when your youngster uses a computer, tablet, smartphone, or video game (say, in the living room after homework is finished). Have him set a timer while he uses a device—when it goes off, it's time to go out and play or help you prepare dinner, for example.

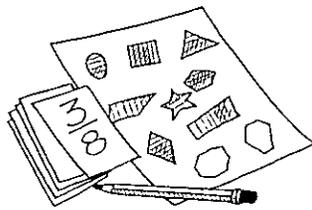
**Use technology as a tool.** Encourage your child to regard a device as a tool to use for specific purposes. He might download an astronomy app to help spot constellations in the night sky or a birding app to identify bird calls during a hike. He'll learn to rely on technology for real-life purposes. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Fraction art

Your youngster can practice identifying and representing fractions by creating this colorful mosaic with you—fraction by fraction.

**Materials:**  
pencil, paper,  
index cards,  
crayons



1. Let your child draw 10 geometric shapes on a sheet of paper, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, trapezoids, and pentagons.
2. On separate index cards, have her write any 12 fractions (examples:  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{2}{6}$ ,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ). Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.
3. Take turns flipping over a card (say,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ). Pick a shape, and color in that fraction on the shape (draw lines to divide it into 8 equal parts, and color 3 parts).
4. When you've used all the cards, shuffle and keep going. Continue until you've filled as many shapes as possible.

**Note:** If you get a fraction that isn't available to color, turn over cards until you select one you can use. ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

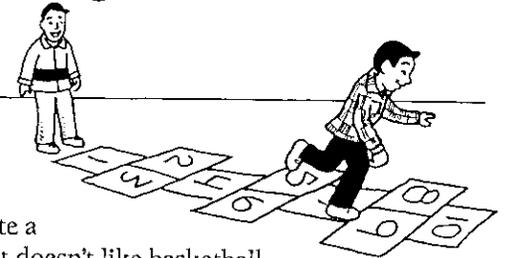
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## A plan for problem solving

When your child faces a problem, having a solid plan can help him figure out how to solve it. So whether he's had a disagreement with a friend or has fallen behind on his schoolwork, suggest this approach.



- **Identify the problem.** Let him write a quick summary of what's wrong. ("Elliott doesn't like basketball, but that's what I usually play at recess.")
- **Imagine the ideal solution.** For instance, he probably wants to remain friends and still play basketball.
- **Figure out alternatives.** Encourage him to brainstorm solutions. *Examples:* "Offer to play with Elliott at recess every other day." "See if he wants to find something to play that we both like."
- **Choose a solution.** He could pick the solution he likes best or that he thinks is most likely to work.
- **Evaluate.** Have him try out that solution and ask how it went. If it didn't work, then he can consider another alternative from his list. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Overcoming shyness

My daughter Gabrielle has always been shy and quiet around people she doesn't know well. This year, her teacher told me she was worried because Gabrielle rarely speaks in class.

We met with the school counselor, who had some good advice. For example, I'm trying to let Gabrielle speak for herself rather than jumping in to "rescue" her. When someone asks her

name, I smile at her and wait instead of saying it for her. I'm also encouraging her to order her food in restaurants and to speak up at places like the hair salon and the dentist's office.

The counselor helped Gabrielle set a goal of raising her hand to answer a question at least once a day. We're having fun practicing by playing school at home—and her teacher just sent home a note saying she's seeing a little progress! ♥

