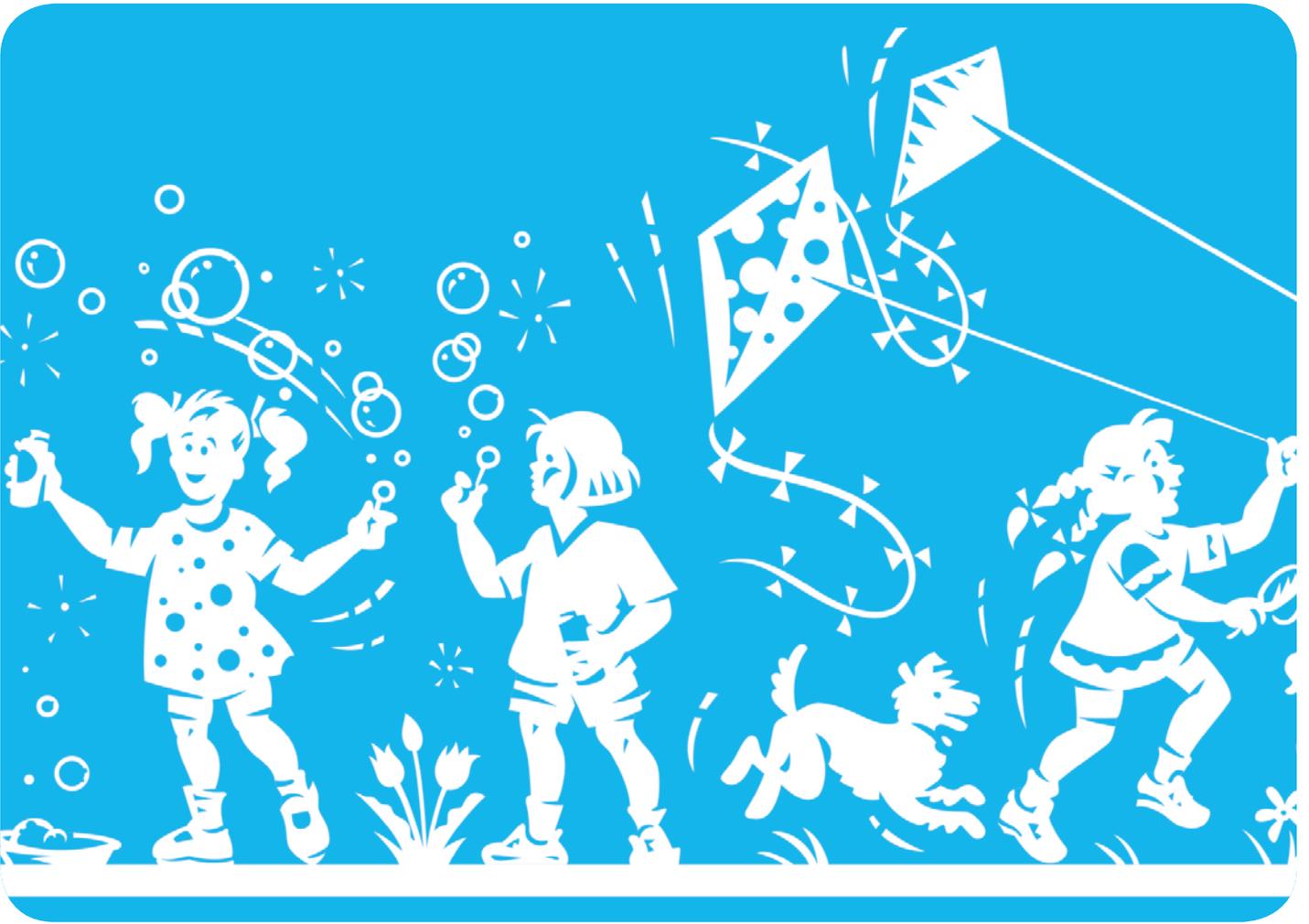
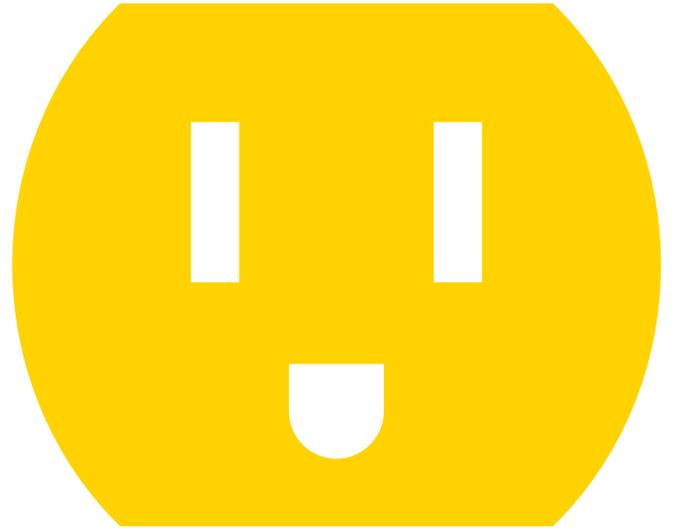


screen- free week

Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood



GET UNPLUGGED!
APRIL 30 - MAY 6, 2012



Contents

What is Screen-Free Week?	3	50 Screen-Free Activities	13
Getting Started	4	Unplug with Social Media Messages	14
Kids and Screens	5	Make Commercial Breaks Activity Breaks	15
Screen-Free Lesson Plan	6	Get Unplugged! Poster	16
Letter for Parents	7	Tips to Reduce Screen Time	17
Screen-Free Pledge	8	Resources	18
Screen Time Tracker	9	Beyond Screen-Free Week	19
See it on Television	10	Back Page	20
Screen-Free Activity Log	11		
Screen-Free Week Certificate of Achievement	12		

What is Screen-Free Week?

WITH MORE ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT options than ever before, it is harder to get children up and moving. The average American child spends over seven hours in front of a screen each day (TV, video games or a computer).

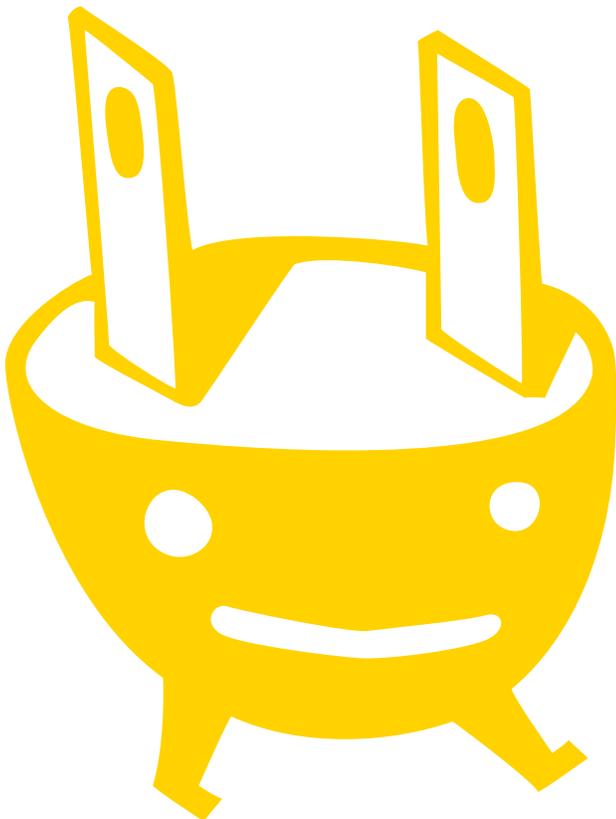
Recent research suggests too much screen time not only displaces time that youth could spend being physically active, it also encourages them to eat more of the unhealthy, high-calorie foods that they see advertised. It is important that children and families be encouraged to be screen-free and engage more in physical activities.

Screen Free Week is an annual celebration encouraging schools, families and communities to turn off the screens and explore other ways to spend time together.

Sharing activities such as family fitness nights, reading at the local library, exploring outdoor parks, and simply enjoying each other's company provides fun alternatives to screentime.

This year the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) is engaging regional and state partners to promote 2012 Screen-Free Week. To celebrate 2012 Screen-Free Week, VFHY has developed this toolkit for schools, childcare centers, faith-based organizations, after-school centers, and others.

The resources that follow are filled with lots of great suggestions and resources. They're not a blueprint, but are meant to be a springboard for your own unique experience. Thank you for being such an important part of Screen-Free Week. Together we can make this year's the best one yet!



Getting Started

Screen-Free Week is a fun way to get unplugged from media and find new ways to improve health by being active. It's also a chance for all of us to examine how much time we spend with electronic media and explore life beyond the screen.

What is "screen time?"

"Screen time" is any time spent in front of a screen, such as a TV, computer, video game player, or iPad. Screen time is a sedentary activity. Most of us are inactive while sitting down. Very little energy is used during screen time.

How do I get started?

Make the commitment. The first step in making a commitment is to understand why Screen-Free Week is important, and why it's crucial to help youth (and ourselves) reduce time with screens.

Keep track. Encourage youth to use the [Screen-Free Activity Log](#) included in this toolkit to allow them to be aware of what they are watching and why.

Be creative! Younger children can plan for things they would like to do during Screen-Free Week and draw it on the [Picture It On Television](#) handout. Older youth may want to use the [Screen Time Tracker](#) to see how much time they spend each week in front of a screen. Check out the [50 Screen-Free Activities](#) for ideas too!

Pay special attention to times when you most depend on screen time and make a plan to be active during that time.

Talk about the benefits of limiting screen time at the end of the week, then set your own screen-free times, like one day a week or during meals.

Remember, it takes a long time to change habits.

Whatever works to reduce screen time is a positive step. Take a look at [Tips to Reduce Screen Time](#).

Use the other sheets in this toolkit to help decrease screen time and help everyone live healthier and more active lives!



Facts about Kids and Screens

WITH MORE ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT options than ever before, it is harder to get children up and moving. Screen time is any time spent watching television and videos, playing video, computer or iPad games, and surfing the Internet.

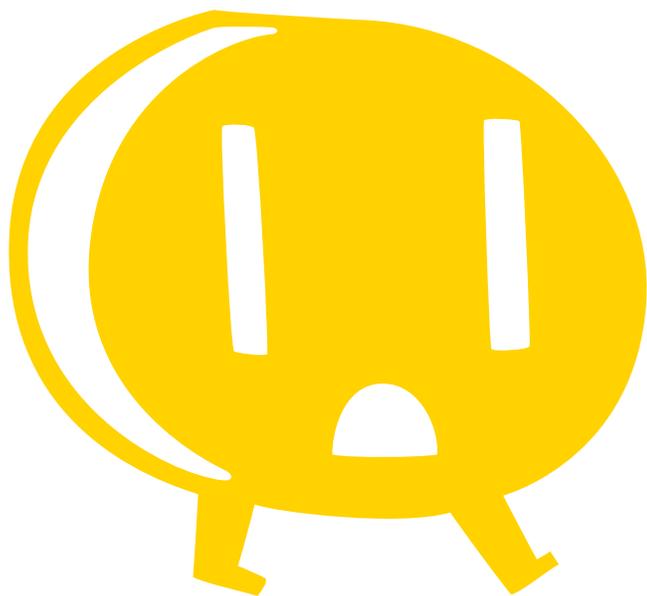
Children today are spending more time with screens than in any activity but sleeping.

How much screen time do children typically watch?

Children ages 8–18 spend the following amount of time in front of the screen, daily:

- Approximately 7.5 hours using entertainment media
- Approximately 4.5 hours watching television
- Approximately 1.5 hours on the computer
- Over an hour playing video games

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under 2 and less than 2 hours per day for older children.



Sources

American Academy of Pediatrics, Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine
Developmental Psychology, Kaiser Family Foundation, Pediatrics, Public Health Nutrition

Screen time and weight gain

- Each hour of TV viewing by school-age kids is associated with 167 additional calories.
- Just one hour of TV viewing daily is associated with higher consumption of fast food, sweets, chips, and pizza.
- Two or more hours of TV viewing daily is associated with significant likelihood of overweight among 3-year-olds.
- Children with a TV in their bedrooms snack more than those who work out.

Screen time and academics

- Middle school children who watched more television, movies and video games did worse in school than those who watched less.
- Third graders with a bedroom TV scored seven to nine points lower on standardized tests than those without a bedroom TV.

Screen time and sleep

- Television viewing among infants and children is associated with irregular sleep schedules.
- Teens watching more than three hours of TV per day are more likely to have sleep problems in early adulthood.

Screen Time Lesson Plan

Introduction (5 minutes)

“Screen time” refers to the time spent watching TV, videos or DVDs in addition to time spent playing video games and using computers. Today, kids in the U.S. spend more time watching TV than any other activity, except for sleeping. Too much screen time is linked to less interest in school and poor grades, and increases the risk of becoming overweight.

The purpose of this lesson is:

- To introduce the concept of “screens”
- To discuss healthy and unhealthy screen habits
- To introduce alternatives to screen time and their benefits

Students will:

- Identify personal and family use of screens
- Identify potential benefits of decreasing screen time
- Identify at least three healthy alternatives to screen time
- Set goals for screen-time reduction for the following week

Materials

- White Board
- Tokens or cards to represent 30 minutes of screen time

Open discussion (15 minutes)

Kids and Screens

- What do you think screen time is?
- What things count as screen time?
- Which do you enjoy the most?
- How much time per day do you believe you should spend on screen time?
- Which do you spend the most time on?

Class Activity

- On the white board, have group compose list of activities they enjoy that count as recreational screen time.
- Show group tokens. Each token represents 30 minutes of screen time. They get a total of 4, representing 2 hours/day.
- Discuss how they would spend their tokens each day. Would they prefer to use them all at once, or spread them out throughout the day so they may enjoy a little bit of screen time all day long? Have group compose a second list of other activities they enjoyed such as playing outside, reading, etc.
- Discuss how these things may be incorporated throughout their days, instead of screen time, or in between screen time.

Optional Activities

- Encourage students to complete the [Screen-Free Pledge](#)
- Use the [Picture It On Television](#) coloring sheet and have markers, crayons and colored pencils available for students to draw a picture of an activity they will do rather than watch television. Then, they can take it home and put in on the television screen as a reminder.
- Encourage students to complete the [Screen-Free Activity Log](#). Were they able to play for 60 minutes each day?

Celebrate Screen-Free Week

Dear Parent,

On April 30-May 6, your child will be participating in Screen-Free Week 2012. During Screen-Free Week, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth encourages youth and families to "Get Unplugged!" This week promotes activities such as playing outside, spending time with family and community involvement instead of watching TV or playing video games.

Studies show that children who watch less TV are more likely to read well and to be physically fit. Each week, American children spend more time in front of a screen than they do in school! Screen-Free Week is a great way to jump-start our kids into more reading, learning, and active play. It's also a lot of fun!

Many parents choose to join their children in turning off the screens and engaging in other fun activities. This kind of support is the best thing you can do to ensure that your child will have a successful and beneficial experience.

Please ask if you would like more information about Screen-Free Week and the effects of excessive screen time for children. You can also learn more by visiting www.screenfree.org. Please return the permission slip below to let me know if your child will be participating.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher: _____

Screen-Free Week: April 30-May 6, 2012

Student's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Please check the appropriate box(es):

- Our whole family will participate in Screen-Free Week 2012.
- Let me know how I can support the group effort!
- Just our child will be participating. We will help him/her complete the program.
- Thanks, but we will not participate this year.

Student Pledge

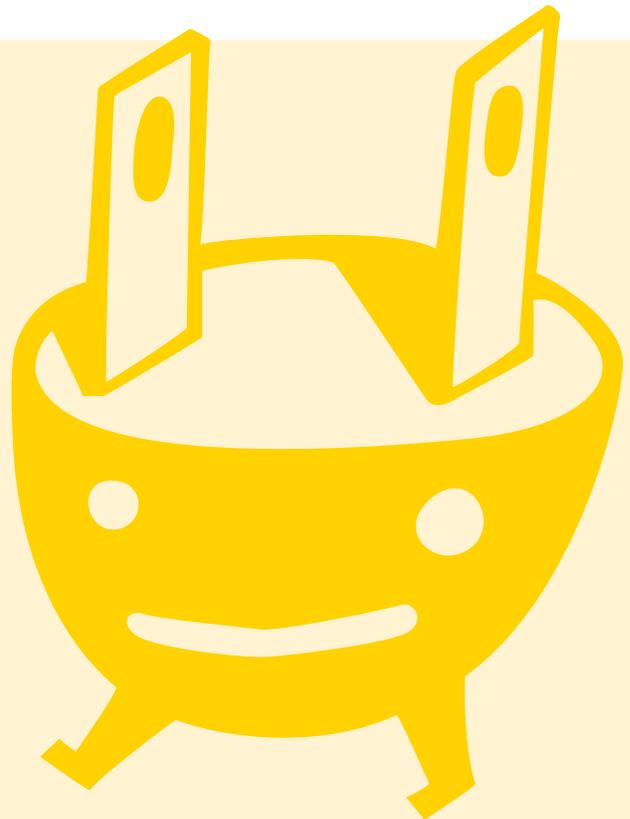
I, _____, am participating in Screen-Free Week 2012 (April 30th to May 6th). I will try my best to turn off the television, computer, and video games and only use the computer if it is required for a homework assignment. During this week, I will try to do more physical activity and explore other screen-free activities. I will also encourage my friends and family to participate in Screen-Free Week with me.

Instead of spending time with screens, I will:

Signature

What You Need To Do:

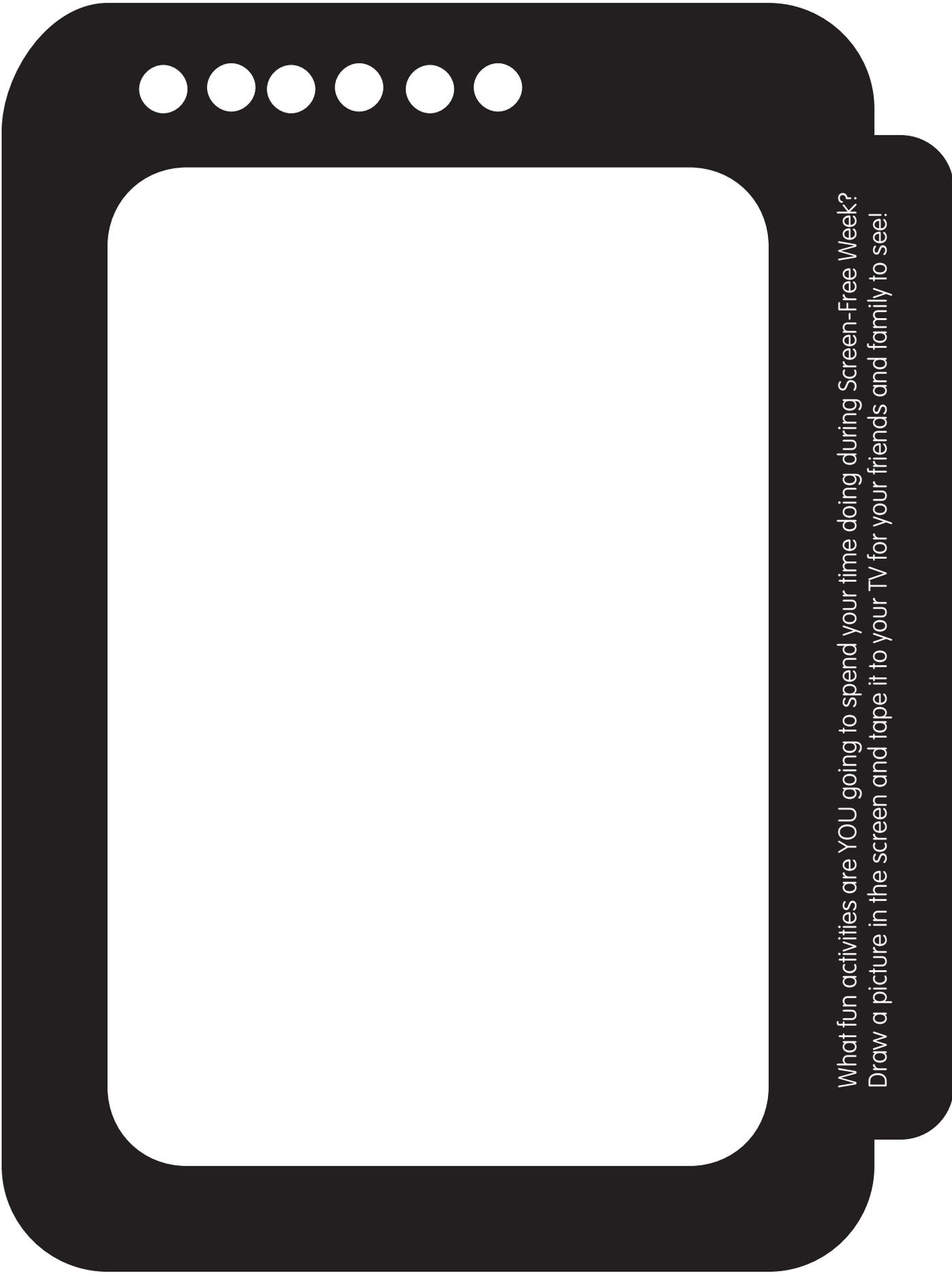
1. Try your best to be screen-free for one week. This means turning off your TV, video games, and computers (except for homework).
2. Be active during your free time every day. Plan an activity each day that the whole family can enjoy together.
3. Aim for 60-90 minutes of physical activity every day.
4. **HAVE FUN!**



Screen Time Tracker

Fill in your total screen time in each column:

	TV	Video Games	DVD/Movie	Computer/iPad	Daily Total
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					
	S=Start Time F=Finish Time T=Total		Weekly Total Screen Time Hours		



What fun activities are YOU going to spend your time doing during Screen-Free Week?
Draw a picture in the screen and tape it to your TV for your friends and family to see!

Activity Tracker

_____ 's Screen-Free Activity Log

What did you do during Screen-Free Week? At the end of each day, write down or draw a picture of what you did each day. This could be with your friends, family or at school. You'll be surprised at how much more you can do when you go Screen Free!

Monday	Friday
Tuesday	Saturday
Wednesday	Sunday
Thursday	 

Certificate of Achievement



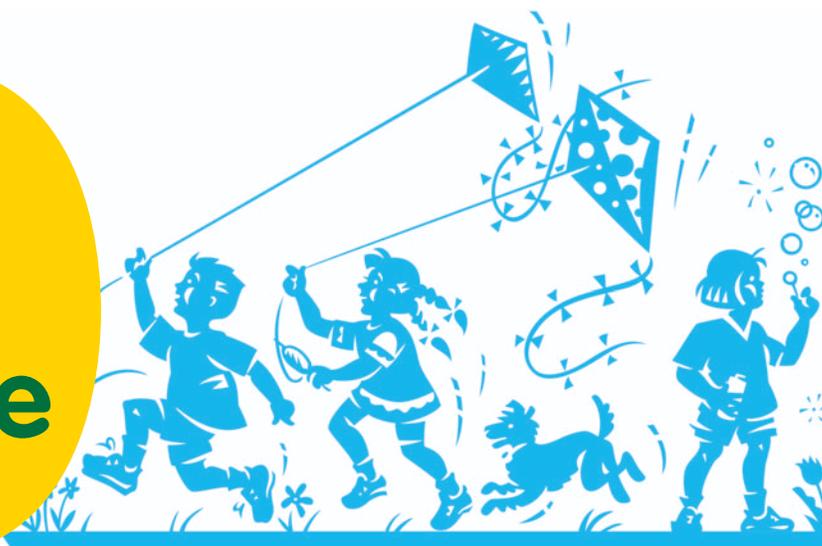
This certifies that

_____ has successfully completed Screen-Free Week 2012!

Signature



50 ways to be Screen-Free



INSIDE

- 1) Draw family portraits.
- 2) Write a letter to your grandparents. Draw them a picture.
- 3) Cook dinner with your parents.
- 4) Write a story.
- 5) Read a book.
- 6) Make birthday cards for your friends.
- 7) Start a journal or diary.
- 8) Paint a picture.
- 9) Invent a new game. Teach it to your friends.
- 10) Learn to play a musical instrument. Make up a song.
- 11) Make up a new board game and teach it to others.
- 12) Do instant recess activities such as sit-ups, jumping jacks or push-ups.
- 13) Have a family game night.
- 14) Make crafts and give them as gifts to friends and family.
- 15) Design a poster for Screen-Free Week.
- 16) Research your family history. Make a family tree.
- 17) Plan a slumber party or your next birthday party.
- 18) Make puppets from old socks and put on a puppet show.
- 19) Put together a puzzle.
- 20) Listen to the radio.
- 21) Build a fort in your living room.
- 22) Create a collage out of pictures from old magazines.

OUTDOORS

- 23) Create sidewalk art with chalk.
- 24) Blow bubbles.
- 25) Take your dog for a walk.
- 26) Play tag with friends.
- 27) Go bird watching.
- 28) Go on a bike ride.
- 29) Climb a tree.
- 30) Stargaze. How many constellations can you find?
- 31) Make an obstacle course using jump ropes, balls and chairs. Have a relay race.
- 32) Help your parents wash their car.
- 33) Fly a kite.
- 34) Start a garden.
- 35) Put up a lemonade stand in your front yard.
- 36) Visit and get to know your neighbors.
- 37) Camp out in your backyard for the night.
- 38) Organize a neighborhood scavenger hunt.
- 39) Play tag, hopscotch or hide and seek.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- 40) Go on a nature walk at the park.
- 41) Join a sports team.
- 42) Go swimming at your local pool.
- 43) Visit the zoo or a museum.
- 44) Have a picnic or a cookout at the park.
- 45) Go to a live sports game.
- 46) Go ice skating or roller skating.
- 47) Go to a museum.
- 48) Visit your public library and stock up on some good books.
- 49) Take cooking, jewelry-making or singing lessons.
- 50) Attend a local concert. Watch a band play.

Unplug with Social Media Messages

Try these Facebook and Twitter posts to get your community ready for Screen-Free Week!

Use them the week before Screen-Free Week to encourage youth and families to Get Unplugged!



Did you know the average adult, by age 65, will have spent 9 years of their life watching television?

Children watch TV an average of 27 hours per week. By the age of 18, the American child has spent more time watching TV than going to school!

Turn the TV off, and turn on the possibilities! 101 Screen Free activities-- www.commercialfreechildhood.org

Play a board game tonight as a family! When was the last time you played Monopoly? Checkers? Or Apples to Apples?

Did you know adolescents who watch 3 or more hours of television daily are at especially high risk for poor homework completion, negative attitudes toward school, poor grades and long-term academic failure?

An average preschooler watches nearly 25,000 commercials.

Did you know 19% of babies 1 year and under have a TV in their bedroom?

How much screen time is your family getting each week? Get each member of your family to create a log to see how long they spend in front of a screen every day for a week. Reward the one with the least amount!

How much is too much? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents keep children away from screens entirely until the age of 2 and then limiting quality programming to 1-2 hours per day.

The average American will have approximately an extra 19 hours and 40 minutes in the week to play, read, exercise and spend more time with family and friends.

Get active, get outside and make memories.

Make Commercial Breaks Activity Breaks

When you do spend time in front of the screen, do something active. Try these ideas at home!

- Stretch. Can you touch your toes?
- Lift weights. Work on building big muscles!
- Challenge the family to see who can do the most push-ups, jumping jacks or leg lifts. Have a contest.
- Jump 5 times as high as you can. See who can jump the highest.
- Dance!
- Play with your dog or cat.
- Pretend you're a snake and slither around the room.
- See how long you can balance on one foot. Then try the opposite foot.
- Hop on one foot as many times as you can without losing your balance.
- Jog in place for one commercial. If that's too easy, see if you can do it for the entire commercial break.
- Hula hoop. Try to do it as long as you can without stopping.
- Use a Physical Activity Cube (directions on right) to decide on the activity!

How to Make a Physical Activity Cube

- Using white card stock, cut out 6 squares. (Create about 6"x6" squares.)
- Write activities on each square. Be creative!
- Tape the squares together using clear packing tape.
- Before you tape the last square on, stuff in a few pieces of crumpled newspaper to give it more stability.

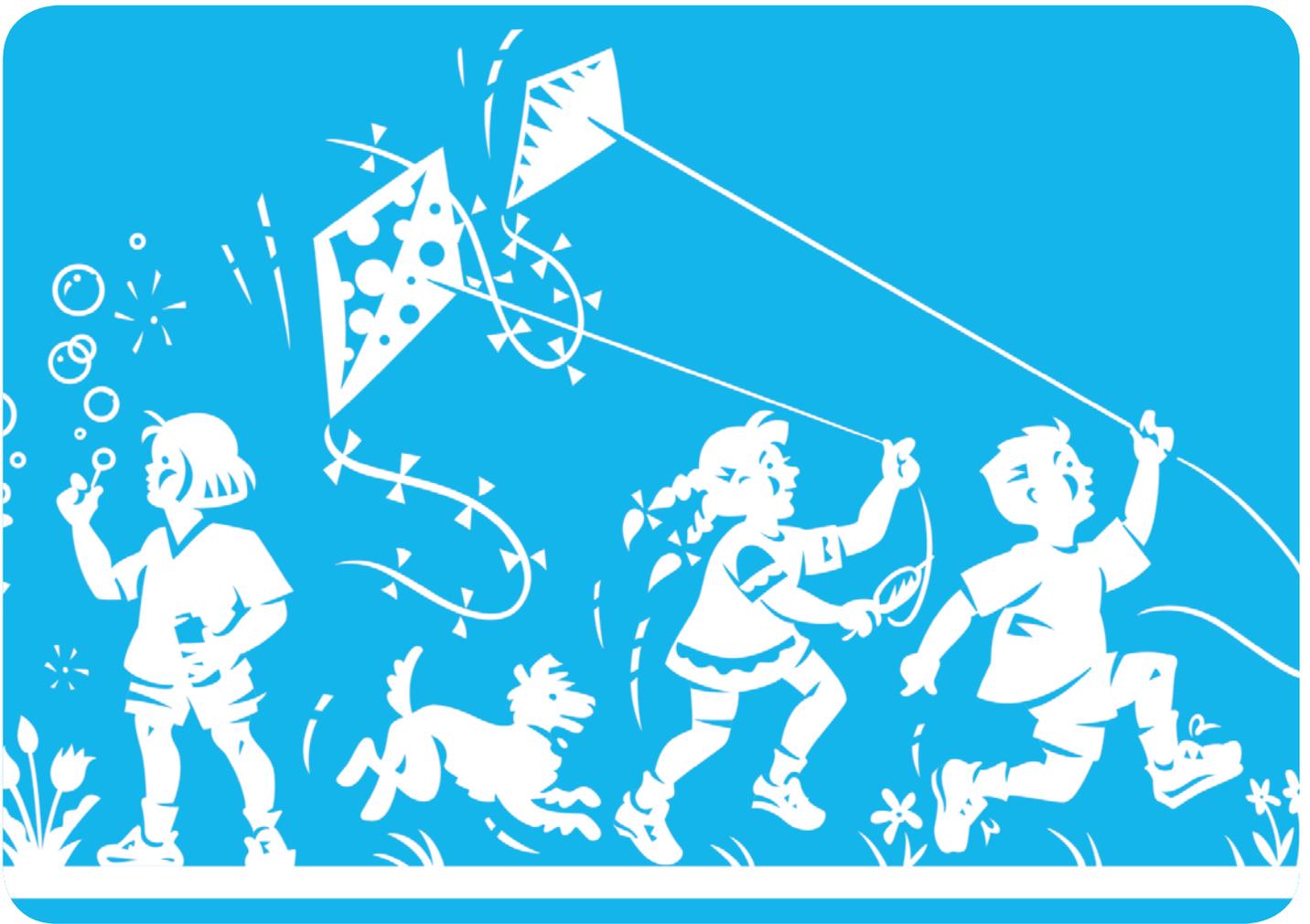
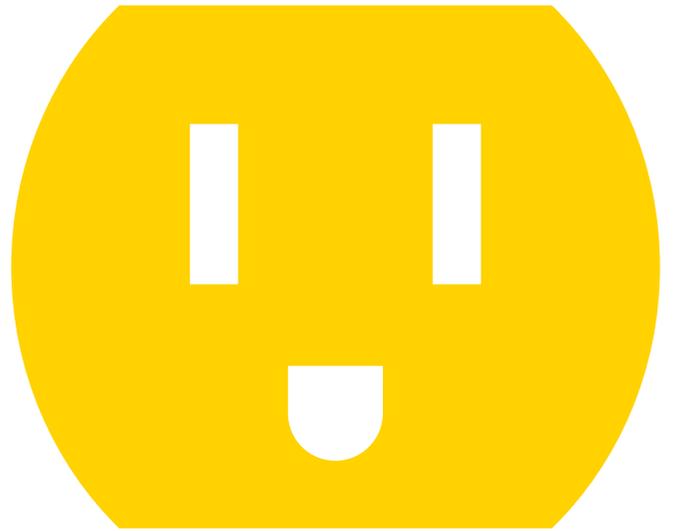
Activity ideas to include on your cube:

- Spin in a circle.
- Jump 5 times.
- Flap your arms like a bird.
- Hop on one foot.
- Dance!
- Run from the front door to the back door.



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Tips to Reduce Screen Time

Here are a few simple tips that will help make it easier to reduce screen time and increase physical activity!

Tips for Parents:

Set screen-time limits: Create a house rule that limits screen time to no more than 2 hours every day. More importantly, enforce the rule.

Find Screen Time Alternatives: Watching television or playing video games can become a habit, making it easy to forget what else is out there. Give your kids fun ideas such as playing outside, getting involved in your community or learning a new hobby. Check out the [50 Screen-Free Activities](#) page for ideas.

Be a Role Model: Set a good example and limit yourself to no more than 2 hours of screen time each day, too. If your kids see you following the rules, they'll be more likely to do the same.

Create Screen-Free Bedrooms: Did you know that kids who have televisions in their room watch 1.5 more hours of television than those who do not?

Make meal time family time: Turn off the TV during meals. Family meals are a good time to talk to one another and share stories about what happened that day.

Be Media Smart: Seeing snack foods, candy, soda and fast food on television affects all of us, especially kids. Share with your kids that just because it is on television or the Internet — or their favorite characters/actors eat or drink it — it does not mean a food or drink is healthy.

Tips for Kids:

Give yourself a limit.

Combine TV and exercise.

Try a kid's exercise program, like on the Nintendo Wii.

Make meal time family time.

Talk with your family about how your day was.

Plan your viewing. Turn on the TV right before your favorite show starts. Turn it off when your show is over.

Watch only shows you really enjoy.

Less Screen Time
EQUALS
More Play Time!

Resources

For more tips and information about promoting Screen-Free Week and the benefits of reducing screen time, check out these resources!

Websites

- **Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood:** www.commercialfreechildhood.org/screenfreeweek
- **Kaiser Permanente, TV-Turnoff:** www.kp.org/tvturnoff
- **Let's Go! 5-2-1-0:** www.letsgo.org
- **Media Smart Youth:** www.nichd.nih.gov/msy
- **Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth:** www.healthyouthva.org

Books for Adults

- **I Love Dirt! 52 Activities to Help you and your Kids Discover the Wonders of Nature** By Jennifer Ward
It's the perfect springboard for imaginations young and old!
- **Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder** By Richard Louv
You will find all the inspiration you need to soak up time outdoors as much as possible!

Books for Kids

- **The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV** By Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain
Random House Books for Young Readers, 1984, ages 4-8
Mom puts her foot down; kids need to play!

Thanks!

A special thanks to our partners for their input into the Screen-Free Toolkit.

- **Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics**
www.virginiapediatrics.org

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
Virginia Chapter



- **HEAL Appalachia**
www.healappalachia.com



- **Get Fit Dan River**
www.geffitdanriver.org



- **Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition**
www.tippingthescales.net
Northern Virginia
Healthy Kids Coalition



Beyond Screen-Free Week

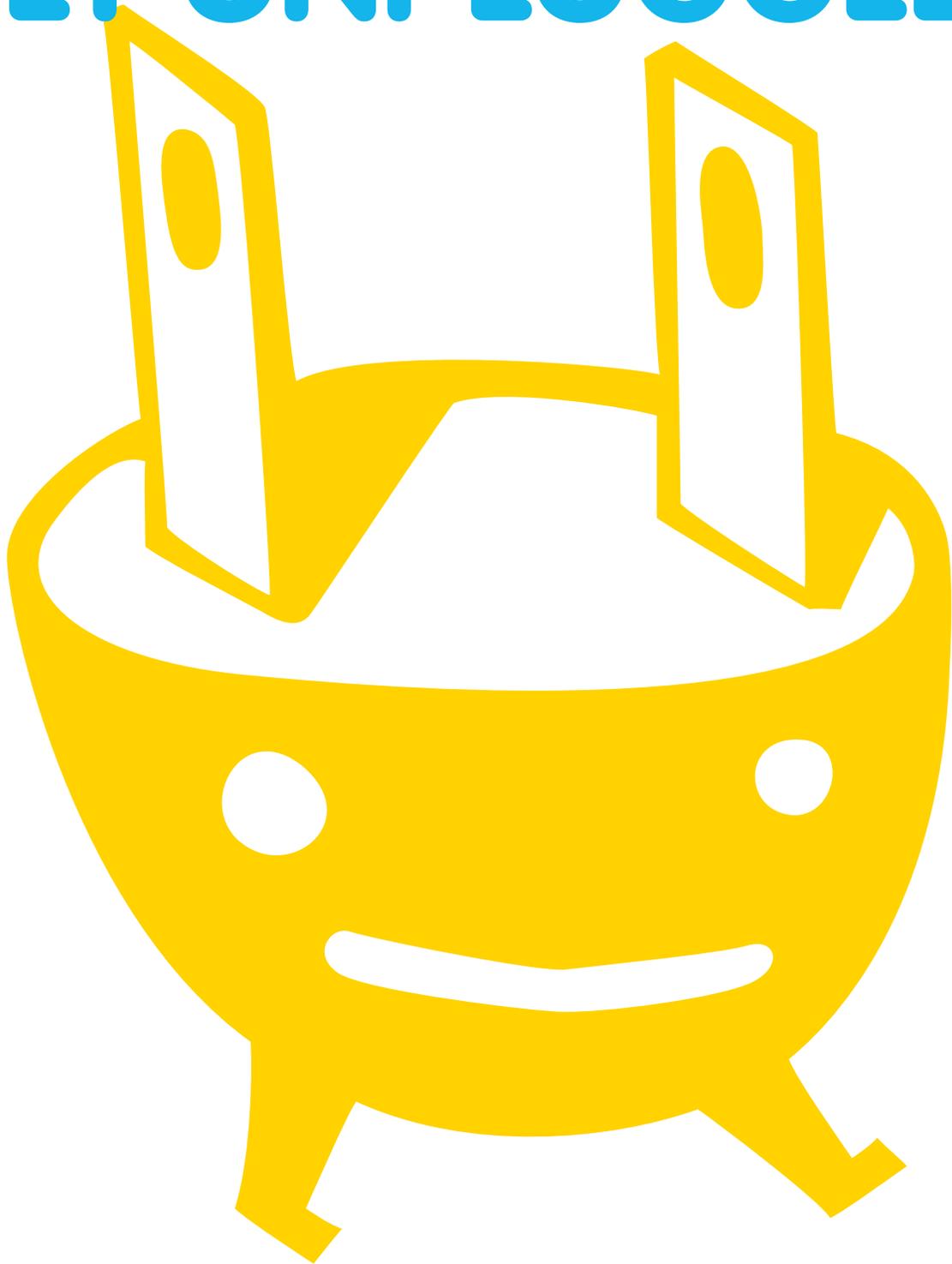
We hope Screen-Free Week will serve as a jumping-off point to help reduce screen time all year!

Here are some ideas to help make Screen-Free Week last:

- Play with your kids at least 30 minutes each day.
- Get up to use the manual controls on the TV instead of the remote control, or keep the remote in a drawer.
- Use non-food related rewards like taking a trip to the zoo or spending the day at the park.
- Check out the “Make Commercial Breaks, Activity Breaks” page for more ideas you can do while watching TV. Do sit-ups in front of the TV. Have a sit-up competition with your kids!
- Join an exercise group or gym. Enroll your children in community sports teams or lessons.
- Visit your local library weekly with your kids. Check out some good books and read together.
- Set consistent limits on your child’s screen time. Remember, no more than 2 hours per day!
- Involve children more in household chores, projects and meal preparation.
- Set one hour each day for the whole family to spend time together. Go outside and kick a soccer ball around or go on a walk after dinner.
- Plan a Family Screen-Free Day! Do any of the activities listed in this toolkit, or think up your own!



GET UNPLUGGED!



screen-
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week



APRIL 30 - MAY 6, 2012

