

# How Plugged-In Families Can Have a Device-Free(ish) Holiday

The trick is to downsize — not demolish — your family’s reliance on technology over the holidays. By Caroline Knorr

What’s topping your kids’ holiday wish lists this year? Chances are it has a screen, Internet access, and games. With a little planning — and kids’ assistance — you can balance your family’s tech activities with much-needed face time. Here’s how:



**Be jolly — but firm.** Let your kids know that you’ll be enforcing stricter time limits to create more quality family time. And tell them that the rules will apply to the grown-ups as well!

**Make a list (and check it with your kids).** Don’t go cold turkey. Schedule some daily tech time for yourself and your kids. Get their input on which devices they absolutely can’t live without, and allow some limited use.

**Plan a device-free dinner.** Put the phones and tablets in a basket and don’t check ‘em til the dishes are done. [Learn what not to do from Will Ferrell.](#)

**Have a download derby.** Browse the app store together. Look for games and activities that the whole family can enjoy, such as the ones on our [our best app lists](#).

**Make setup fun, not frustrating.** No matter how easy to use companies make new devices, there’s always some (often frustrating) setup time. Truth be told, kids often figure out thorny tech glitches faster than parents, so involve your kids in the process. Use that time to discuss responsible use of the new device.

**Try some tech togetherness.** Unplugging for its own sake isn’t the point. Family time is. Plan a night of video games, movies, or maybe preselected [YouTube videos that you can all enjoy together](#).

**Combine on- and offline activities.** Document your family memories and consider compiling them into [journals, cards, and scrapbooks](#). This is a perfect time to share your own holiday memories with your kids.

**If no creatures are stirring ... don’t check your email.** Remember, your kids learn their media habits partly from you. Use quiet time to reflect on ways you can maximize the benefits of technology without letting it take over your family’s life.

**Have an old-fashioned holiday.** [Challenge your family to choose low- or no-tech versions of favorite activities.](#) Generate fun on your own steam — no WiFi, data, or plugs.