

iPads in Kindergarten

Safety considerations

We've all heard horror stories about children's use of screen time and internet access. There are some real risks that come with implementing technology into your classroom, but there are also many ways to make sure they're using technology safely.



Just like the devices themselves, children need protection to use iPads safely.

Tip: If the apps you need don't depend on Wifi, you can keep children from accidentally getting online by enabling "Airplane mode" from the settings. Plus, this mode is great for battery life. You can also use "Restrictions" settings to disable the web browser and limit content to age-appropriate ratings.

Setting ground rules

One of the most effective ways to keep children safe using iPads in the classroom is to set some rules right from the start – and to consistently enforce them. Children are more likely to follow these rules if you remember a few tips:



- Talk to children about posture and distance from the screen.
- Talk about safety rules before the first time children use iPads. Review these rules regularly
- Give an age-appropriate explanation of each rule. Children want to know *why* they need to follow rules, not just because someone said so.
- Use positive phrasing wherever possible to keep a respectful environment. (Eg. “Walking feet when you’re carrying an iPad. Look where you’re going.”)
- Ask children to help you generate some of the rules. This way, they’ll feel more responsible for following their own ideas.
- Take time to review the rules to see if anything needs to be changed over time.

Screen time limitations

I’m sure you’ve heard about how children these days are getting far too much screen time. Major pediatrician groups have released guidelines about how many hours per day and week children should have with devices. While we agree with these organizations, we’d also like to point out that there’s a huge difference between *passive* screen time described by the organizations, and *active* screen time that we observed in our study. When children use iPads to explore, create, and express, they are actively engaged in their learning. Sometimes it does make sense to limit the amount of time children can play on the iPads, but sometimes children need time to engage deeply in their learning. As the teacher, you know best when children need a bit more time.

Tip: Guided access mode allows you to restrict children from switching apps without asking you first. You can also use it to disable parts of the screen (such as app settings), and even set a timer.