15 SEP HOW DO I SET UP IOS 12 SCREEN TIME CONTROLS?

Posted at 04:06h in Devices by Chris McKenna · 9 Comments · 0 Likes · Share

IOS 12 IS GREAT FOR PARENTS. BAD FOR BUSINESSES.

We've been running the iOS 12 beta this summer and we're happy with the results. There's always bugs to work out, but on the eve of Apple's final release, we wanted to show parents exactly how to maximize the new Screen Time Parental Controls that Apple has been touting for months.

Screen Time will give parents the type of control over their child's iOS device (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch) that used to be available only through a paid service, like Circle or OurPact. But Apple is now erasing a large chunk of the value these parental controls companies used to provide. It will be interesting to see who survives.

BTW – if you want to get iOS 12 before everyone else, then become a beta tester.

If you're still running something other than iOS 12 and you need to set up Apple's Restrictions, we explain those here.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR

MAXIMIZING IOS 12 SCREEN TIME

SET-UP PART 1: ESTABLISH FAMILY SHARING*

Note: if your child is already part of your Family Sharing, then skip down to Set-up Part 2 below. Also, whether you're running iOS 12 or a previous iOS version, these Family Sharing steps will be the same up until step 10.

Getting the most out of Screen Time starts with understanding Apple's Family Sharing feature. On a parent phone, you'll want to establish a parent as the "Organizer," for the family, who functions as the Administrator. If you've never set up Family Sharing before, it's done by following steps **(1) through (7)** below.

You can add up to six (6) family members under Family Sharing. If you want to add a child who is <13-years-old, you would click "Create a Child Account" in **step (5)** below. **Beware, once you add a child who is <13 to your family, you cannot remove that child without transferring him/her to another family. Apparently, Apple doesn't want any child's digital oversight to be simply deleted.

If you select "**Invite in Person**" from **step (5)** below, which is what we recommend, then you will see the screen shot with **step (7)**. Just type in the Apple ID and password for your child's account (yes, you should know their Apple ID and password!). **Note, Apple pays very close attention to the birthday attached to your child's Apple ID, so make sure it's correct.

Example: if you attempt to add someone as a **"child"** in Family Sharing, but their birthday makes them 20-years-old, Apple will classify them as an adult. THIS IS MASSIVELY IMPORTANT, because you cannot exert any of the iOS 12 Screen Time controls over anyone who is >18 according to the birthday on their Apple ID.
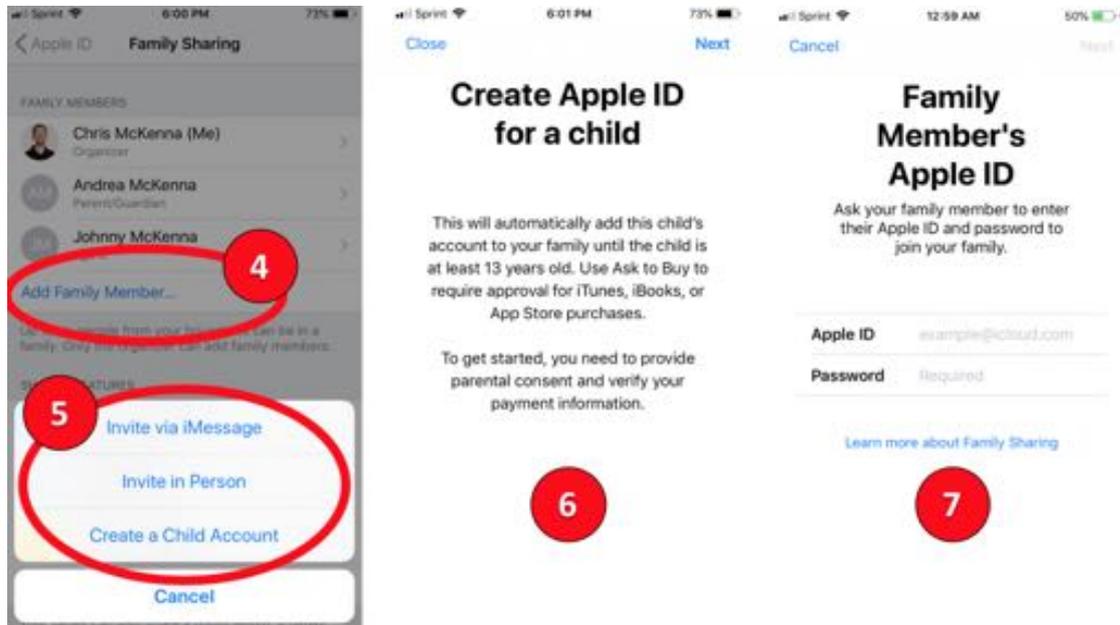
After you input your child's Apple ID and password, you will be asked a series of questions about whether you want to approve their App downloads (yes – **step (8)** below) and share their location (also yes – **step (10)** below). Whether or not you want to share purchases made by your child on your own phone is your decision (**step (9)** below).

You're then ready to start setting up Screen Time! Screen Time replaces the former Restrictions that parents know and love. Don't worry – in this case, change is good.
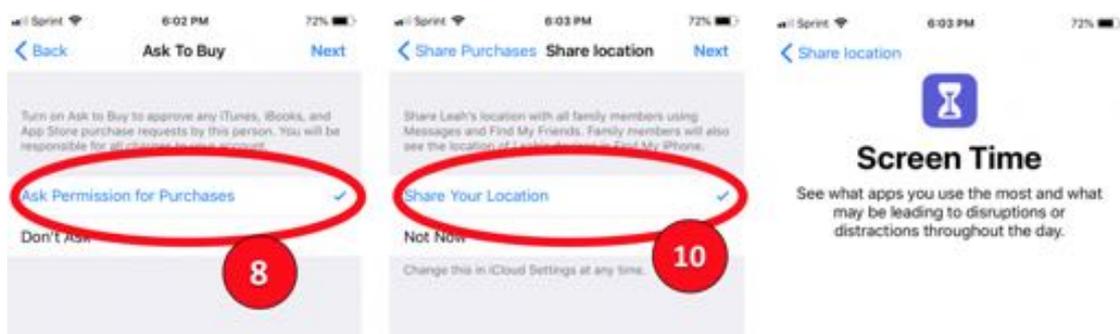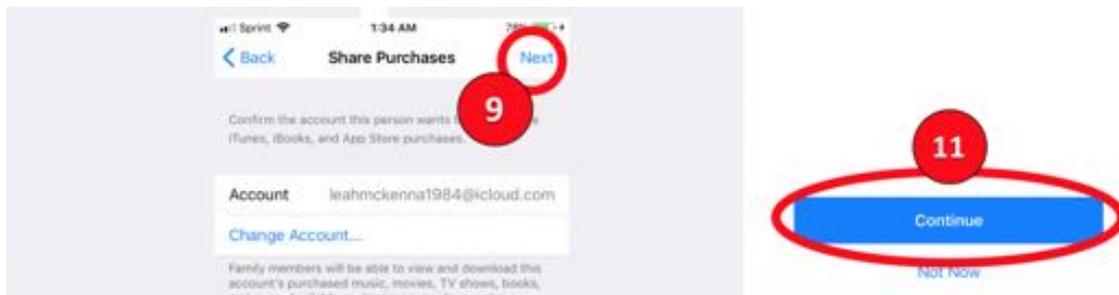
The first Screen Time step is to control **Downtime**, which is creating a block of time when the iPhone's apps aren't accessible (other than those you designate, which we'll show in later steps). Ideally, you might set Downtime to shut off the iPhone during bedtime. Maybe also during homework time. Lock in the timeframe by clicking "Set Downtime" as shown in **step (12)**.

**Special Note – I had one parent ask us this, "In Our Pact, I can just shut down my kid's apps, which I love. Can I do that in Screen Time?"

The answer is, "YES!" Once you've linked your child's iOS device to yours, you can go into their Downtime settings and if you set the start time for something before "now," then, Downtime will enabled and their apps will shut down per what you set up in **step (21)** below. It's a bit of a hack, but until Apple provides an Our Pact like "panic" button, it seems to be the only way.

Another note about Downtime – one of its weaknesses is that you can't set multiple and different "Downtimes." For example, you might allow later access to apps on Friday than on Tuesday. I'm hoping Apple listens to complaints and improves this (you can leave feedback for Apple here).

Next, the set-up will lead you to **App Limits**, which is an allowance feature. You can allow for a certain amount of time to be spent on categories of apps during a day. FYI – iMessage is categorized under "Social Networking."

Update! You can set time limits for individual apps, but it's not intuitive how you get there.

Click into Screen Time **->** Click "All Devices" (very top option over the graph) **->** within the "Most Used" listing **–>** Click on whichever app to add a limit to **->** Scroll down to where it says "Limits" **->** "Add Limit" (could Apple make

that any more obscure?)
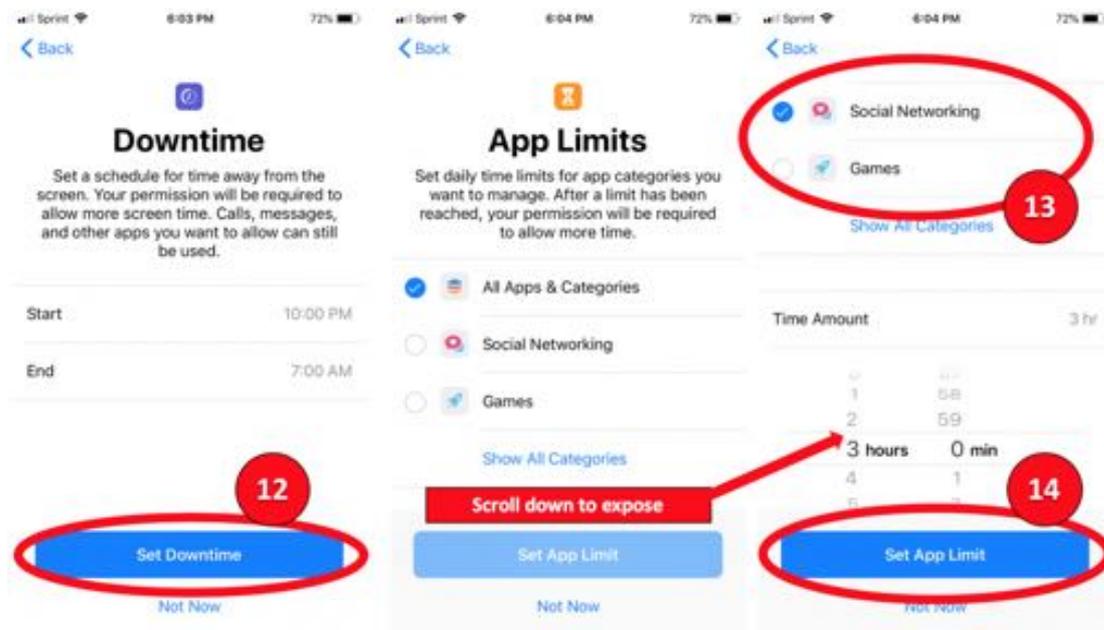
The final step in the automatic set-up is simply informing you that Content & Privacy controls exist and that you should set those. You'll see those in steps a bit later in the post. Next, establish a 4-digit code WHICH YOU DON'T WANT TO FORGET! This is just like the Restrictions code from before and if you lose it, you'll need to factory reset the device.

Once you click "Done" as shown in **step (16)**, your child is now officially added to the Family through Family Sharing, and has a decent layer of protection established through Screen Time. Now, we need to tighten up a few other Screen Time protections that are available in iOS 12.
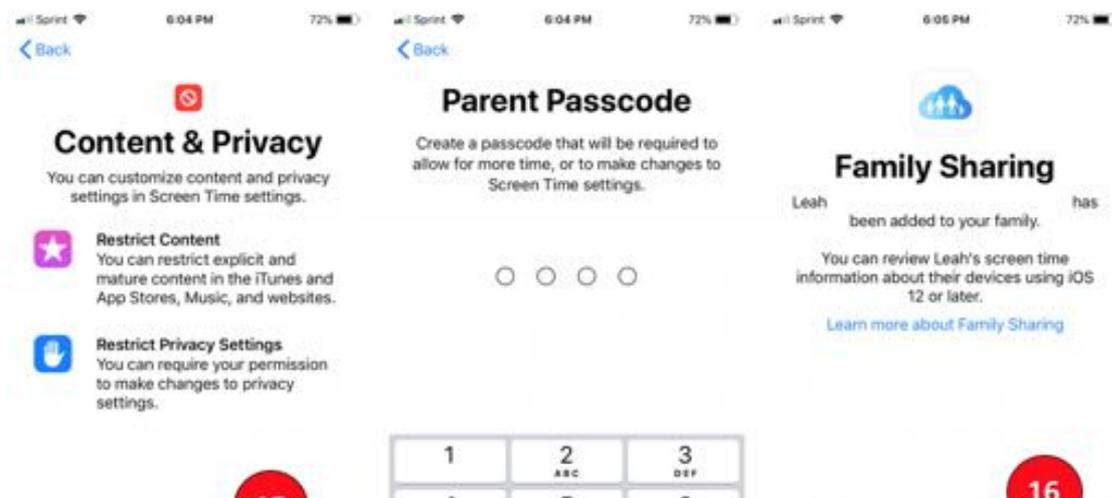
SET-UP PART 2: TIGHTEN UP IOS 12 SCREEN TIME CONTENT AND PRIVACY CONTROLS

Note: if your child was already part of your Family Sharing, then this is where you pick up the Screen Time set-up.

Ok, either you just added your child to Family Sharing or he/she has been added for a while. In my screen shots, you can see Leah McKenna, my fictitious, 15-year-old daughter, and now it's time to adjust additional items in her Screen Time settings, so click on Screen Time as shown in **step (17)** below. If you have multiple members of Family Sharing <18-years-old, they'll show up in the list shown at **step (18)** below. I've blocked out children other than the fictitious Leah.

If your child was already in your Family Sharing when you upgraded to iOS 12, then you'll want to click through both **Downtime** (**step (12)** above) and **App Limits** (**steps (13) and (14)** above).

But, assuming both Downtime and App Limits are established, next we're going to work on **Always Allowed** as shown in **step (20)** below. These are the apps that are literally always available, even if Downtime is enabled.
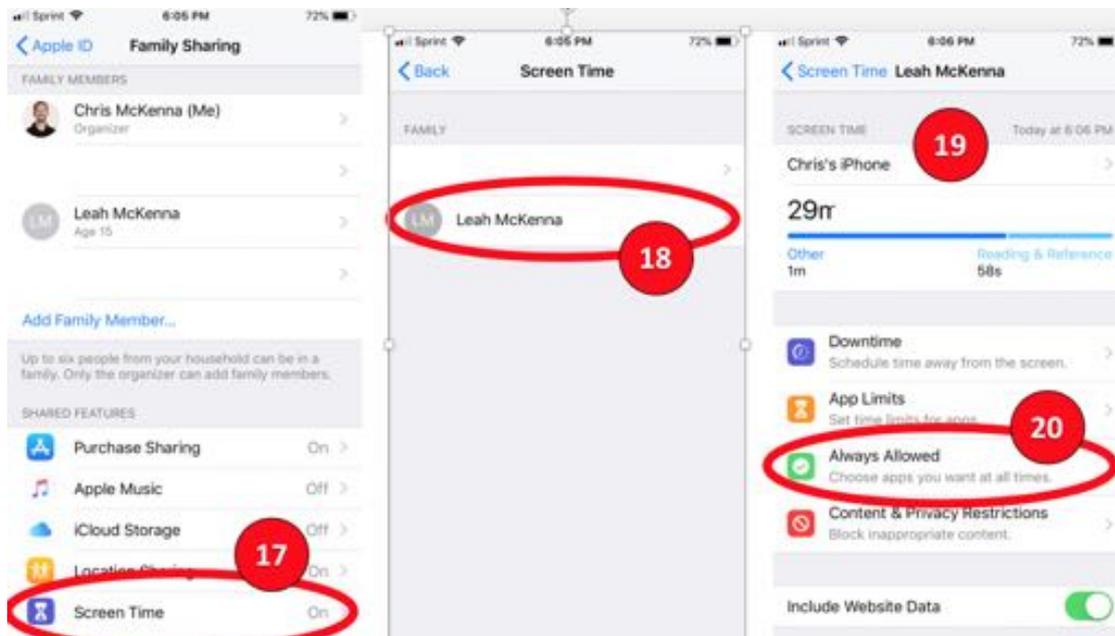
As you can see in **step (21)** below, allowing the phone, iMessage, FaceTime and Maps are the default settings, but you can adjust these however you want. For example, maybe during homework downtime, you remove iMessage, but keep the Calculator app active.

Step (22) then starts the adventure into content and privacy settings. This is where a lot of parents will start to see territory they remember from the former Restrictions. After clicking on Content & Privacy Restrictions in **step (22)**, you'll want to toggle on "Content & Privacy Restrictions" as shown in **step (23)** and we'll get started in "iTunes & App Store Purchases" in **step (24)**.
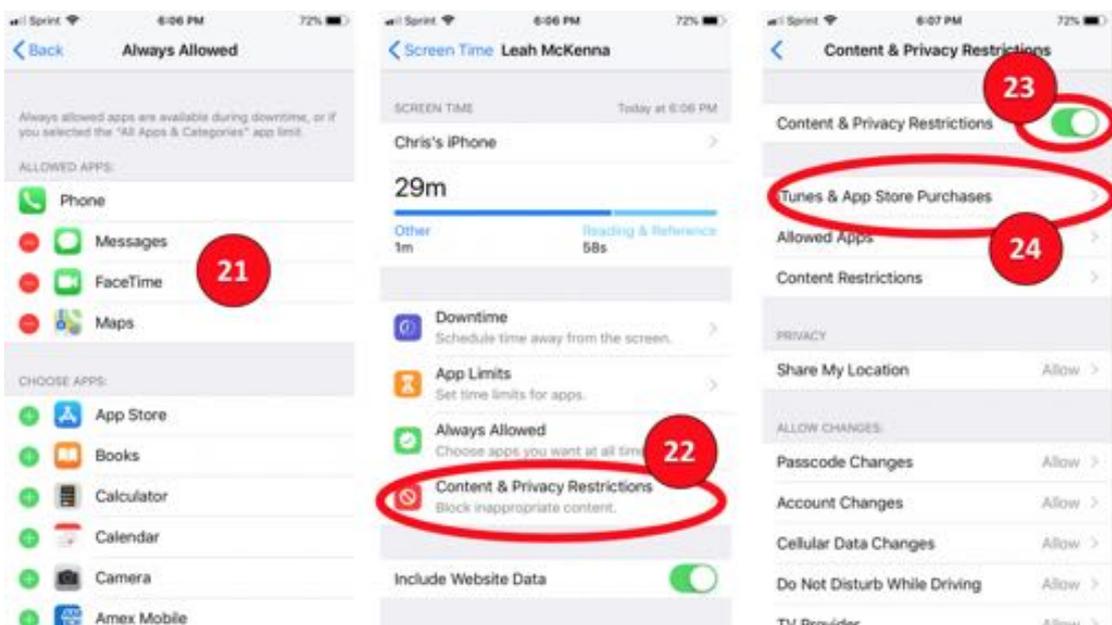
Step (25) below shows our recommended set-up for iTunes & App Store Purchases, disallowing kids from deleting apps they might download and disallowing in-app purchases. You can either allow or disallow "Installing Apps," because hopefully you already set up the child to require app purchase approvals as part of Family Sharing (shown in **step (8)** above).

Click back and then click on the next item, which is "Allowed Apps," as shown in **step (26)** below. It's on the screen shown in **step (27)** where you can toggle on or off a number of items permanently, like Safari, the

camera, the App Store altogether, or Books. These are really up to you. If you are using a filtered browser like Mobicip, Qustodio, or Covenant Eyes, then you'll want to toggle Safari OFF (BTW, all three of those services are excellent).

Even if you've required approval for app purchases, for younger users, you might decide that they don't even need to see a lot of things in the app store by toggling it off in **step (27)**. Remember, there are >2 million apps in the Store, which is growing daily!

*Related post: Turn off the App Store – Here's 3 Reasons Why*

Click back and then click on the next item, which is "Content Restrictions," as shown in **step (28)** below. For many parents, this section is of great interest. It's in here where we can clean up Safari with "Limit Adult Websites" (**steps 29-30**). It's also here in **step (31)** below where parents will want to black list certain websites that still allow inappropriate content through even with "Limit Adult Websites" enabled (Note – this is only applicable if you are using Safari as the browser. If you toggle Safari off, as recommended in **step (27)** above, and use a monitored browser like Mobicip, Qustodio, or Covenant Eyes, then what I'm about to say doesn't apply).

If using Safari, even if "Limit Adult Websites" is clicked, you'll still want to click "Add Website" in **step (31)** and add these websites to the "Never

Allow" list:

- Imgur.com
- Reddit.com
- Yandex.com (Russian search engine)
- Dogpile.com (easy to toggle off safe search even with Screen Time enabled)
- Flickr (lots of inappropriate content)
- Excite.com (old search engine, can toggle off safe search even with Screen Time enabled)

With "Limit Adult Websites" enabled, you cannot delete Safari's search history. So, parents can inspect the types of websites and searches kids are attempting by clicking Safari -> the Book icon in the bottom menu of Safari -> then the clock option at the top, right. You'll notice the little "Clear" option in the lower right is greyed out, since "Limit Adult Websites" is enabled.
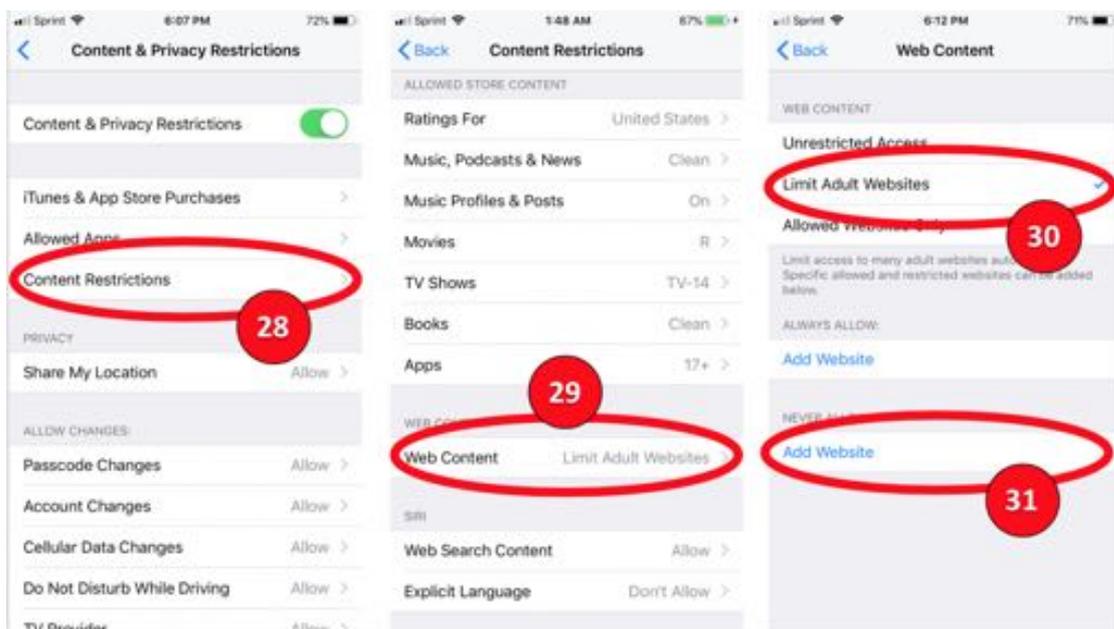
You'll also want to set content limits for Books, maybe Music, Movies, and Apps as shown just above where it says **step (29)**.

Finally, when you're done with Content Restrictions, click back to limit the child's ability to change the Apple account on their device an evade your control. You might want to set "Passcode Changes" and "Account Changes" per our settings shown in **step (32)**.

After that, you'll be able to fully control the Screen Time settings for your

child's device from anywhere. Just click Screen Time on your device (**step 33**), scroll down to see your child's name (like my fictitious daughter, Leah McKenna), and select her name (**step 34**).

From there, you'll also be able to review any device that your child's Apple ID is signed in on. In our example screens, my fictitious daughter's device is the Chris iPhone shown in **step (35)**. If I click on Chris iPhone, I'm instantly shown her usage on that device, including the amount of time and when (**step 36**), and when she received notifications on what app (**step 37**).
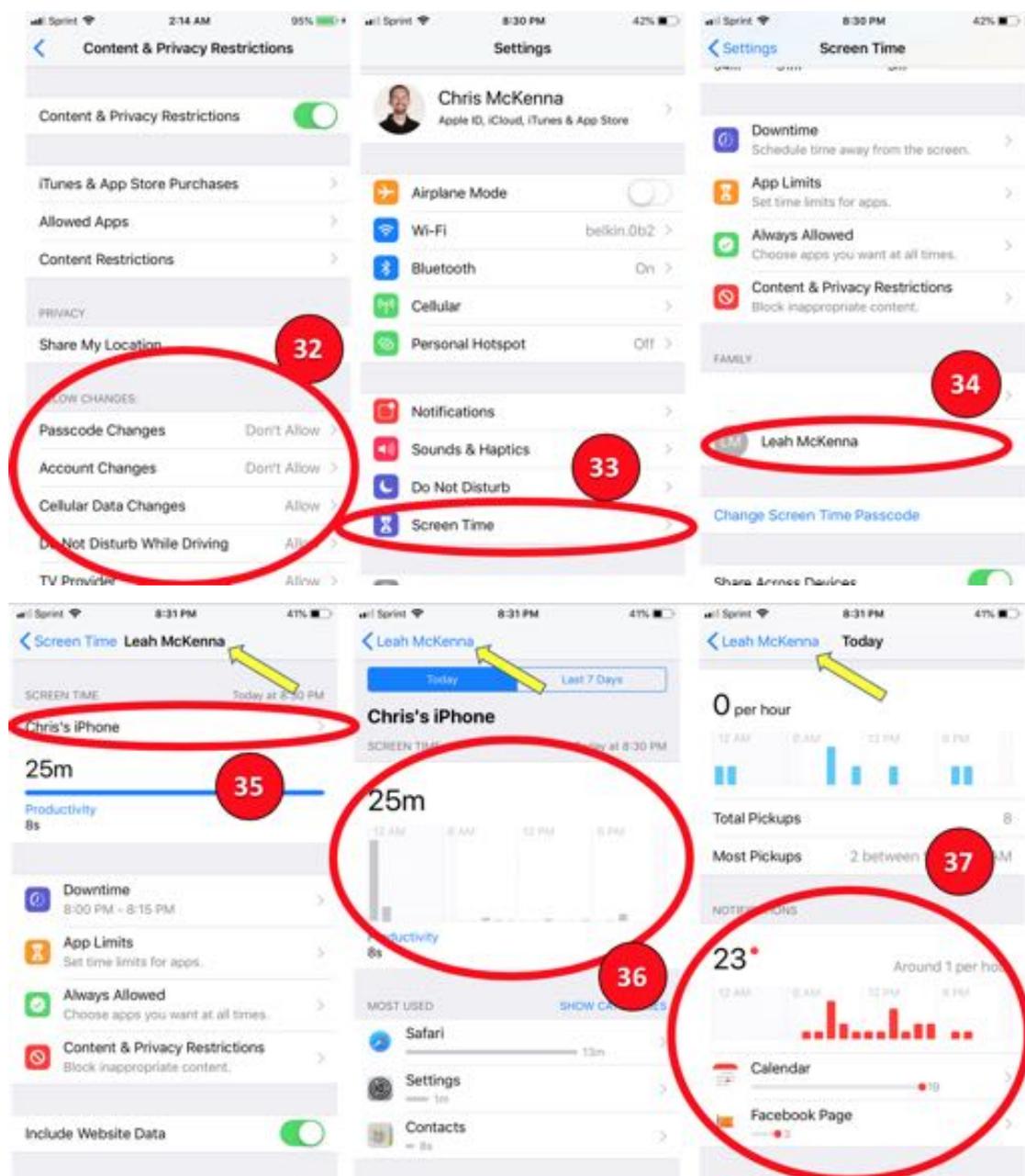
REMEMBER, PARENTAL CONTROLS DON'T REPLACE PARENTS

We're excited for these parental controls from Apple. But we still get more

excited when we see parents stepping up and intentionally guiding and teaching their kids how to use technology well. That plus parental controls like iOS 12 are a potent combination.

Now, by just clicking into your children in Family Sharing, you can see at a glance their usage. And you don't even have to grab their device!

Maybe Google will try to follow suit with Android, which even with Family Link, lacks the control that parents need.

We hope these instructions are helpful! Do you know other Apple families? Would you please share these with them?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT IOS 12 AND APPLE SCREEN TIME:

Our family shares an Apple ID. How does that impact Screen Time?

This just means that certain rules will impact all devices using the same Apple ID. For example, if you set a Downtime rule for shutting off certain apps from 10pm – 7am, this (according to Apple), "will apply to all devices that are using iCloud for screen time." One consideration – with the arrival of Screen Time, which gives parents greater control over their child's device(s), it *might* be a good time to allow your child to have his/her own Apple ID as a way to see how they do with some additional responsibility.

Do I need to upgrade both my device and my child's device to use Screen Time?

Yes, both the parent and the child device need to be upgraded to iOS12 in order for the Screen Time controls to work on the child's device.

What happens if I forget my 4-digit Restrictions code?

Unfortunately, there is no easy recovery without a factory reset, which will delete all data, including contacts, photos, music, and messages. This is not a decision to be made lightly! Some people have commented that it's possible to restore an iPhone through iTunes, which is true. But, the restoration will also restore whatever Restrictions were enabled on the iTunes backup.

Can't my son or daughter simply perform the factory reset and

circumvent the 4-digit code?

Technically, yes, this is possible. But, it will mean erasing all data. If you have a high-risk child you might be devious enough to perform a factory reset, then make sure you set the Apple ID for the phone when the phone is first set up (or follow these steps to change the Apple ID for an iPhone). For iOS 7 and beyond, the Apple ID that was in place prior to the reset/reboot is required in order to initiate the device after the reset/reboot. This was put in place to deter thefts of the devices.

But, now with iOS 12 and the weekly activity reports and being able to see the amount of time that a phone is being used, as soon as an Apple ID's time plummets, that's a flag that maybe something has been changed.

Can I shut off my kid's apps anytime I want to?

Yes! Once your child's device is linked to yours, as you can see in **steps (33) – (35)** above, you have complete control over the device. By clicking Downtime on your child's device and setting the "Start" time to five (5) minutes ago, you will instantly begin blocking the phone's apps, per whatever apps you've allowed to stay active or inactive in **step (21)** above.

How Does iOS 12 Work with Popular Parental Controls?

Bark **+ iOS 12 Screen Time** = solid monitoring of *some* social platforms, iMessage, and the app control explained above.

Covenant Eyes **+ iOS 12 Screen Time** = amazing content filtering through their browsing app, Accountability Reports sent to parents, a lock on YouTube Restricted Mode in the YouTube app, and the app control explained above.

Mobicip or Qustodio (they're similar) + iOS 12 Screen Time = amazing content filtering through their browsing app, and the app control explained above. Quite a bit of the value these services used to provide parents with app control can now be handled through iOS Screen Time.

If you can afford Bark ($9.99/month or $99 annual) + Covenant Eyes ($15.99/month or $183 annual) + iOS 12 = an amazing triple layer of protection.

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CHRIS MCKENNA

Living life to the full! That's why He died and how I try to live. I have an eclectic list of professional experience...CPA, business advisor, youth pastor, development director, now educational resource manager for Covenant Eyes. God shares wild ideas with me about life while I run. I want to show parents how to protect their kids from online dangers, which led to the creation of Protect Young Eyes. We recently created Virtue in Media, the first digital citizenship curriculum based on Scripture (www.virtueinmedia.com).

TAGS: Apple, iOS 12, screen time

9 COMMENTS

SCOTT FITZHARRIS
Posted at 19:10h, 19 September

You should look into OurPact. I was excited to see what Screen Time had to offer but unfortunately it's really a first generation release and I doubt Apple will truly be trying to enhance it much more.

We use Bark and OurPact – literally nothing stronger in my opinion.

CHRIS MCKENNA
Posted at 22:58h, 19 September

Hi, Scott! I've looked into OurPact and you're right, they're good. I suspect Apple isn't done. I'm glad those solutions work well for you! I agree that they are both strong.

Chris

ANDREA HANSON

Posted at 17:44h, 23 September

Followed the instructions and it worked beautifully for a day and now none of it is working? I tried turning both devices off and back on and still no controls being used? Any help is appreciated!

SUMMER TALLINA

Posted at 19:24h, 23 September

Hi!! Thanks for the amazing information! We have been using OurPact, Mobicip & Bark for all 3 of our boys for several years now (Bark just recently) and we have been beyond pleased with the combination. I'm excited about iOS 12 & your insight has helped tremendously.

You may need to know that Mobicip has changed. They are no longer an independent browser. They now filter all search engines, including those within apps. They also offer "App Supervision", which in my opinion, is not easy to navigate, at all. It would be great if it were, because it is interfering with the iOS app rules I have set. And I don't want to lose Mobicips filtering capabilities because they are by far the best.

Any insight to this issue would be greatly appreciated! I'm very tech savvy but I can't figure this one out.

PS! Thanks for what you're doing for our kids and our families. It's nice to have a "partner" in the world of technology!

CHRIS MCKENNA

Posted at 01:58h, 30 September

Hi, Andrea – the fact that it worked and then stopped sounds like an Apple Customer Service stop. They're actually really responsive if you give them a call.

Chris

DAVID EATON

Posted at 10:21h, 30 September

Chris. This is amazing. Thank you for your hard work on this.

ADI EL

Posted at 20:15h, 02 October

If I have iOS 12 and use the built-in screen time, is that a worthwhile replacement to OurPact?

CHRIS MCKENNA

Posted at 23:41h, 02 October

Hi – OurPact is built specifically for parental control and its UX (user experience) supports it. Meaning, it's very user-friendly and parents typically like it. Screen Time has complimentary features, but it's not built specifically for parents and isn't quite as user-friendly. It's a good first step by Apple, and it's free, so a user just needs to weight the pro's and con's.

Chris

CHRIS MCKENNA

Posted at 23:43h, 02 October

Hello! Yes, I'm aware of the Mobicip changes but I wasn't aware of its interference with iOS 12 features. Have you reported this to their support? Given how many parents are using Screen Time, I doubt they would want to create constant interference. I'm also in communication with them and can inquire, but inquiry from multiple sides wouldn't hurt. Please let me know if you find anything out (contact form on the website).

Thanks! Chris

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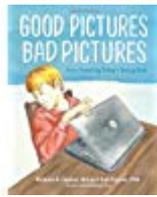Kid & Teen Issues

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