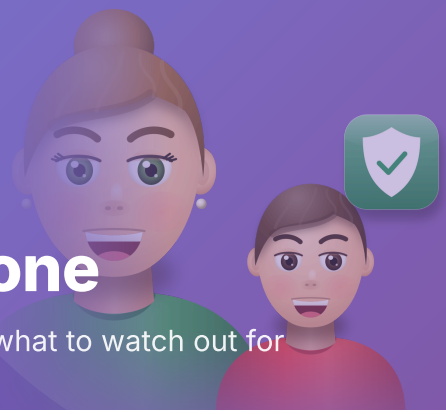
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IPHONE TIPS · NO. 10 | UPDATED FOR IOS 27

Parental controls on iPhone

What the experts recommend, how to create a child's account and what to watch out for



1 What the experts say

In 2025, the **Sociedade Portuguesa de Neuropediatria (SPNP, Portuguese Society of Paediatric Neurology)** published evidence-based recommendations on screen use, adapted to Portugal. The **World Health Organization** recommends **no screens before age 2** and, from 2 to 4, **no more than 1 hour** a day, with less being better.

AGE	SCREEN TIME PER DAY	GUIDANCE
0–3 years	**Avoid**	Video calls with family only. TV up to 30 min, always with an adult and suitable content.
4–6 years	**Up to 30 min**	Quality programmes, watched with an adult who helps explain what is on screen.
7–11 years	**Up to 1 hour**	No screens in the bedroom. Start talking about personal data and false information.
12–15 years	**Up to 2 hours**	No social media. Close supervision of apps and contacts.
16–18 years	**2 to 3 hours**	Consider access to social media from age 16.

Source: Recomendações para a Utilização de Ecrãs e Tecnologia Digital em Idade Pediátrica (Recommendations for the Use of Screens and Digital Technology in Children), SPNP, Sinapse journal, 2025. Screen time should never take hours away from sleep, study, physical activity and time with others.

2 Rules for every age

- **No screens at the table.** Never use the phone to make mealtimes "easier".
- **No screens in bed.** Light and stimulation delay and worsen sleep. Phones charge outside the bedroom.
- **Content chosen and watched together**, especially with younger children.
- **Parents set the example.** Children copy the use they see at home.

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3 What the law says in Portugal

Current law sets **13** as the age from which a minor can consent alone to using social media. In February 2026, the **Assembleia da República** (Portuguese Parliament) approved in principle a law that raises this limit: **a ban under 13**, **verified parental consent between 13 and 16**, and independent access only from 16. Check what stage the law has reached before deciding.

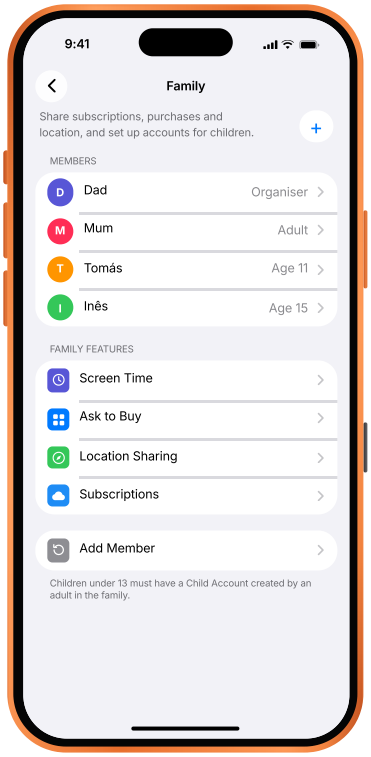
> **And Apple?**
> Apple requires a **Child Account** for children under 13, created and managed by an adult in the family. From 13 to 17, the iPhone turns on content filters and Communication Safety by default.

4 Creating your child's account

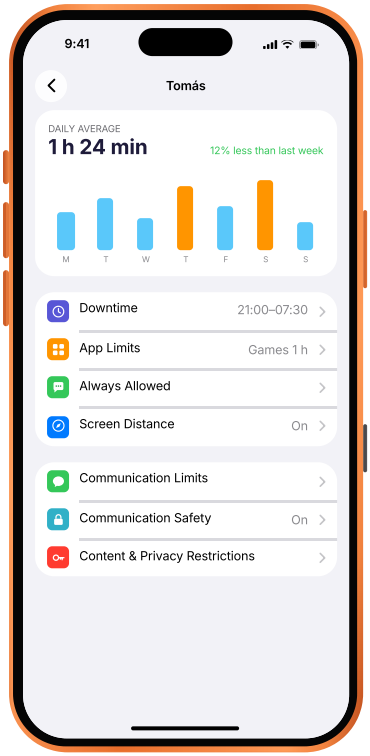
Settings › Family › Add Member

1. Tap **Create Child Account** and enter the name and the **real date of birth**. It determines which protections apply.
2. Confirm you are the responsible adult and choose the account's email address.
3. Turn on **Ask to Buy**: every app or purchase needs your approval.
4. Set up **Screen Time** (step 5) and **Location Sharing**.
5. On your child's iPhone, sign in with the new account.

> **Already has an account with the wrong age?**
> Correct the date of birth and add the account to your Family: the iPhone converts it into a Child Account and applies the right protections for the age.



Settings › Family



Settings › Family › [child] › Screen Time

5 Setting up Screen Time

- **Downtime:** the iPhone "sleeps" at night and during study time. Only calls and the apps you allow remain available.
- **App Limits:** a maximum time per category, such as games or video.
- **Always Allowed:** parents and emergency contacts are always available.
- **Communication Limits:** choose who your child can talk to and message.
- **Communication Safety:** blurs nude images received or sent and offers help.
- **Content & Privacy Restrictions:** app age ratings, website filtering and purchase blocking.
- **Screen Distance:** warns when the iPhone is held too close to the eyes.

> **Screen Time passcode**
> Use a passcode **different** from your iPhone passcode and don't type it in front of your child.

6 Day to day

- Look at the **weekly report** together with your child and talk about it.
- Answer **requests for more time** with clear rules agreed in advance.
- Review the **installed apps** and **contacts** once a month.
- Adapt the rules to each child's **age and independence**.

? Warning signs

Talk to your child and, if needed, seek help if you notice:

- Irritation or anxiety when they are without their phone.
- Poorer sleep, tiredness in the morning, falling grades.
- Isolation, less interest in friends and activities.
- Excessive secrecy, deleting messages, hiding the screen.

Risks and warnings

- **Games with chat:** many online games have chat open to strangers. Turn the chat off or limit it to friends.
- **Photos:** once an image is sent, it can no longer be controlled. It is the starting point for blackmail with intimate images (sextortion).
- **Location:** turn off location for apps that don't need it and for photos that are shared.
- **In-app purchases:** coins and "loot boxes" in games lead to spending without you noticing.
- **Filters are not foolproof.** No setting replaces conversation and supervision.
- **Fake accounts:** adults pose as children. Teach your child never to arrange to meet someone they only know online.

A family agreement

Rules work better when they are **agreed together**, not just imposed. Write a simple agreement together and put it up at home:

- **When:** what times the phone can be used and when it goes to charge outside the bedroom.
- **Where:** never at the table, never in bed, never in class.
- **What:** which apps and games are allowed, and who approves new ones.
- **If something goes wrong:** your child tells you **without fear of punishment**. This is the most important rule.

Where to get help in Portugal

Linha Internet Segura (Safe Internet Helpline), run by **APAV** (Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima, the Portuguese Victim Support Association): **800 21 90 90**, free and confidential, weekdays from 8 am to 11 pm, or linhainternetsegura@apav.pt. For cyberbullying, illegal content, blackmail or suspicious contacts. In immediate danger, call **112**.

Would you like help setting up your child's iPhone? PAULO VASCONCELOS FREITAS – Tech Atelier, in Funchal and Horta: we help you create the Child Account and set up Screen Time.