



Lola, Mac, and Bennitt had a lot of fun during Screen Free Week this year.  
Photo by TL Brown

# KIDS IN PRINT

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## Unglued from the screen

By T. Lee Brown

Snowed in, or hunkering down while a virus runs its course, people get “glued” to their screens. Phones, TVs, computers, and gaming consoles provide connection, entertainment, and news.

What is life like when you unplug for a while? Not long ago, students at Sisters Elementary School found out. Many kids and families tried out Screen Free Week. There were bingo boards, prizes, and a special discount night at Hoodoo Ski Bowl.

How did kids feel about it? Kids in Print asked the fourth graders of Ms. McCord's class to weigh in on their experiences.

### Mac Maloney

“I did a puzzle, I listened to some books on tape, and I played,” Mac Maloney said. “I thought Screen Free Week was fun.”

Mac was sick during part of the week. It was tempting to do something on a screen because he stayed home while everyone else was at school. He said it felt good to know that he can control his own behavior. His mom told him he could watch a movie because he was sick.

“And I said no,” Mac said proudly.

### Lola Magner

Lola usually has consistent screen time, but she thinks it's “not too much. My mom tries to make a balance of it.” The thing she missed most during Screen Free Week was a Disney program she watches regularly.

But she didn't miss it that much. Lola enjoyed doing different things instead. “I played a bunch of board games and had a couple of dance parties,” she said.

“Normally, I wouldn't go to the playground,” she explained. “Normally, I wouldn't go there because it's usually full of little kids.” It ended up being fun.

Lola compared all this activity to watching her Disney show: “It actually made my body feel a lot better. I felt like my brain was more clear.”

Screen time makes her eyes feel tired, Lola has noticed, and sometimes she gets headaches. She said that this didn't happen while she was off-screen.

Lola said she wants to change how she uses technology in the future. “My mom said that we are going to start only watching screens on the weekends now,” she added.

### Bennitt Hayes

“We were born in Sisters, Oregon!” hollered Bennitt with a grin. He described Screen Free Week as “difficult. You gotta really try to do it.” He was motivated to win an extra recess at school.

Bennitt described himself as being “obsessed with” some new X-Box games. During SFW, “It was weird at first, but now I'm playing more Monopoly, playing with my dog more, playing baseball—doing a lot more stuff outside than I normally would.”

How does that feel? “Hard at first, but you eventually get used to it,” said Bennitt. Would he do it even without a reward? “I think like once a month, for three or four days I might do it.”

Bennitt noticed that his feelings changed during this time. “I don't get as mad as easily,” he said thoughtfully.

## Opinions on Screen Free Week

Written by Fourth Grade Students at Sisters Elementary School

I think Screen Free Week is hard and fun! You get to do fun stuff that you don't normally do like watching the sunset, play a game with your siblings, go for a walk, and hang out with family. And the reason why I think that it is hard is because you might really want to watch a movie with your family, watch shows about Bigfoot, or watch a scary movie. Screen Free Week is supposed to help our brains not turn to mush, and so we can get a better education in school, and so we can have a good paying job. —Emma

I think Screen Free Week is a great program. It gives our brains some time to rest. Also, sometimes our brains need to get away from the bright lights of the screens. Our brains need to sit back and relax!

- Play with my puppy
- Play with lots of toys
- Read a lot

Also, I think it might be a little challenging because the TV. or screen is just sitting there wanting to be touched. And why I think Screen Free Week would be easy is because you can enjoy your time with toys, family, friends, and just to sit back and relax! —Madison

I think Screen Free Week is a wonderful idea because it gives kids a break from screens. Kids spend a lot of time on screens every day and with none of that for a week, everything that they may learn on a screen may be learned in a book instead. Some kids spend so much time on their screens that they don't spend very much

family time. A screen-free week, though, will prevent that. Also, too much screen time can be bad for our brains. So, in conclusion, I think that Screen Free Week is good for kids and try to challenge your siblings and parents too. —Ella

