

## LOG OFF. LACE UP.

### Scouting Provides Tools Youth Need To Get Off Screens & Onto The Trail Of Personal Growth

Depending on a child's age, one to two hours a day is the amount of time kids should spend with TVs, computers, and video games, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. The AAP says, "Excess screen time in childhood is associated with many adverse health outcomes, including sleep problems, obesity, and a range of [mental health issues](#)."

We see it and hear it all the time; our kids never want to go outside and more and more they choose to communicate online. Especially as we continue to readjust post COVID lockdowns, kids are connecting with peers less and real, in-person conversation is minimal.

The ultimate consequences of excess screen time are still being researched. Many tools are being offered, through organizations like the AAP, for families to better understand and manage the extent of technology's hold on their kids.

For the youth here in Montana, the Boy Scouts of America is an antidote to the trend of lethargy and apathy, replacing it with mental wellness, personal growth, and civic responsibility.

As you already know, Scouting encourages youth to interact in the real world, get outdoors, and work together to accomplish tasks. It helps young men and women discover and build character in fun and engaging ways. Scouting provides a blend of recreational and educational activities that allows youth to explore the outdoors, try new hobbies, learn new skills, serve their community, and build relationships with families and friends.

In 2016, a study published in the [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health](#) found that adults who were in Scouting as a child had 18 percent lower odds of mood or anxiety disorder by age 50.

"Joining groups like Scouting has the potential to offer young kids and teens opportunities to stay mentally healthy in multiple ways," Rebecca Schwartz-Mette, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at the University of Maine, [told U.S. News and World Report in a 2017 article](#) about the study. "Scouting, for both girls and boys, involves a variety of activities, including the development of healthy peer relationships, self-confidence, service to others, community engagement, physical fitness, and even financial literacy through sales."

In other words, the BSA believes in providing the tools for each Scout to build strong values so they can become future leaders with fulfilling and successful lives.

Yes, Scouts go camping, hiking, and learn outdoor skills. However, some may not realize that there is also volunteerism, donating time, and giving back through service projects. Organizations like Scouting are more important now than ever, providing in-person, active programs that are a safe place for kids of all ages to explore on their own. Where youth can

build confidence while becoming the best possible versions of themselves as they choose their path to success. Where they are taught to “Be Prepared.”

If you know of someone whose family could benefit from Scouting, [direct them to our website](#) and let them know we are available to answer any questions to help start them on the trail to adventure.

The mission of the Montana Council is to help young people make ethical and moral decisions over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.  
[www.montanabsa.org](http://www.montanabsa.org)