

The 2026 North Atlanta Children's Screen Time Report

How Digital Media Is Reshaping Sleep, Mental Health, Physical Activity, and Family Life — What the Research Shows for North Georgia's 600,000+ Children

Prepared by One Family Pediatrics Serving Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Dawson, Cherokee, and Fulton Counties

Data Sources: NCHS Data Brief No. 516 (July 2021–Dec 2023) | NCHS QuickStats MMWR Nov 2024 (Physical Activity + Screen Time) | Common Sense Media 2025 Census | Pew Research Center 2024 & 2025 | CDC 2023 YRBS (MMWR Supplement) | AAP 2026 Guidance | Georgia HB 340 (Distraction-Free Education Act, signed May 9 2025) | NSCH 2022-2023 | U.S. Census Bureau 2020 / QuickFacts 2025 | State of Childhood Obesity / NSCH 2023-2024 | North Atlanta School District Enrollment Data 2023-26

50.4%	8h 39m	2.7x	86%
of U.S. teens report 4+ hrs daily recreational screen time (NCHS)	average daily screen use for teens 13-18 (entertainment only)	higher depression symptoms in high- screen teens (NCHS)	of parents say managing screen time is a daily priority (Pew 2025)

BOTTOM LINE: The six-county North Atlanta area is home to an estimated 615,000 children and more than 394,000 enrolled K-12 students across its school districts. Half of U.S. teenagers report at least four hours of daily recreational screen time. Teens in the high-screen group are 2.2 times more likely to report anxiety and 2.7 times more likely to report depression symptoms. They are also 29% less likely to meet physical activity guidelines. Georgia's high-school students report persistent sadness and hopelessness at rates that have increased significantly over the past decade. And 86% of parents now describe managing their child's screen time as a daily priority. Georgia responded in 2025 by enacting the Distraction-Free Education Act — and North Atlanta's school districts are responding with varying approaches that reflect genuine community debate about how to manage children's digital lives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Screen time among children and adolescents has become one of the most studied topics in pediatric medicine — and one of the most actively debated in Georgia's school districts. This enhanced edition of the 2026 North Atlanta Children's Screen Time Report incorporates data from seven primary sources not available in the preliminary version: a new NCHS QuickStats analysis linking screen time directly to physical activity levels, updated YRBS 2023 national mental health figures from the CDC's MMWR supplement, Pew Research's parent and teen concern data from 2024 and 2025, Georgia HB 340's district-by-district implementation status across all six counties in the study area, confirmed school enrollment data from each North Atlanta district, Georgia childhood obesity context from NSCH 2023-2024, and the expanded NSCH screen time distribution covering all children from ages 6 to 17.

The national picture is clear and consistent across every major data source. Half of U.S. teenagers report four or more hours of daily recreational screen time. Teens in that high-use group are 2.2 times more likely to report anxiety symptoms, 2.7 times more likely to report depression symptoms, and 29% less likely to meet physical activity guidelines compared to lower-use

peers. Georgia's 37.3% child overweight and obesity rate — ranking 37th nationally — is not directly attributable to screen use, but the displacement pathways between screens, physical activity, sleep, and weight are consistent with what the national data documents.

The local picture adds a dimension the national data cannot: North Atlanta's school districts are actively grappling with this question in real time. Forsyth County Schools moved proactively ahead of state law to ban phones during the full school day. Cherokee County already had restrictions in place before Georgia passed HB 340. Gwinnett County's board approved K-8 restrictions but did not extend them to high school. These differences reflect genuine community debate — and they create an environment where the guidance One Family Pediatrics provides on screen use is particularly relevant to the families in this study area.

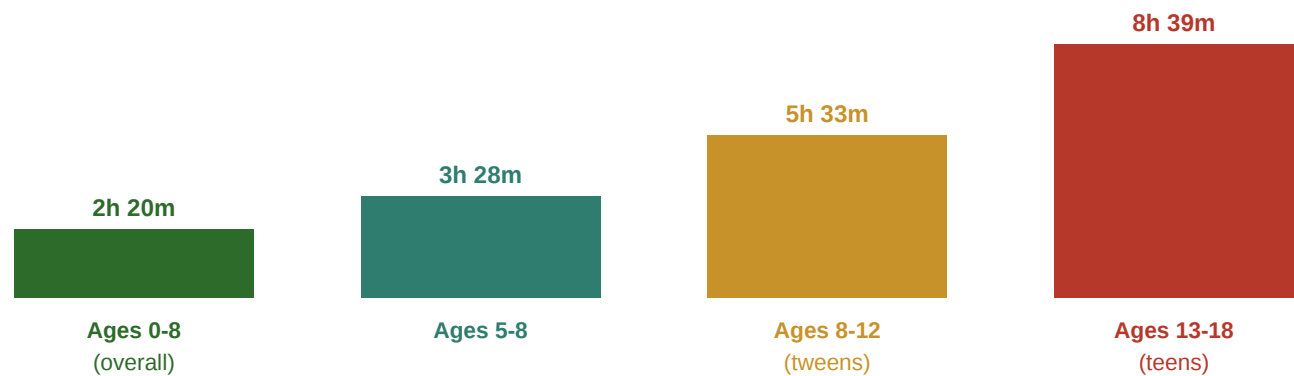
Finding 1

Screen Use Begins Early and Rises Dramatically — From 3.5 Hours at Age 5 to 8.5 Hours by the Teens

149% increase in daily screen use from ages 5-8 to 13-18

Common Sense Media's 2025 national census found that children ages 5 to 8 averaged approximately 3 hours and 28 minutes of daily entertainment screen media use. The Common Sense national census for tweens found 5 hours and 33 minutes daily, and for teens 8 hours and 39 minutes — an increase of more than five hours per day, or approximately 149%, from the 5-8 cohort to the teenage cohort. These averages measure entertainment media and exclude schoolwork. The NSCH 2022 parent-reported measure, which covers children ages 6 to 17 across a typical weekday, found that 22.2% of children reported four or more hours of daily screen time — a broader age range that captures the full childhood distribution. Between 2019 and 2021, Common Sense Media documented a 17% increase in entertainment screen use for both tweens and teens, a faster rate of growth than the four years before the pandemic. Elevated use patterns established during that period persisted through 2023.

Average Daily Entertainment Screen Media Use by Age — U.S. National Estimates



Source: Common Sense Media 2025 Census (ages 0-8 / 5-8); Common Sense Media National Census (tweens 5h 33m; teens 8h 39m). Entertainment media excludes schoolwork.
AAP 2026 guidance: consistent limits on time, type, and context for ages 6+; protect sleep, activity, and family connection.

Average daily entertainment media use: Common Sense Media 2025 Census (ages 0-8 / 5-8) and Common Sense Media National Census (tweens 5h 33m; teens 8h 39m). NSCH 2022 national screen time distribution (broader ages, parent-reported): <1 hr 14.4% | 1 hr 16.0% | 2 hrs 28.4% | 3 hrs 19.0% | 4+ hrs 22.2%.

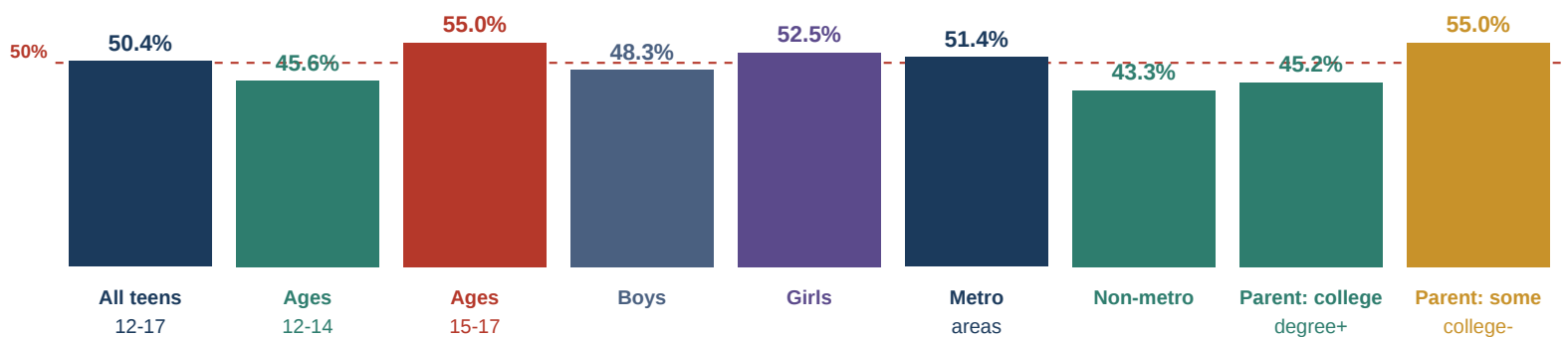
Finding 2

Half of U.S. Teenagers Cross the Four-Hour Mark — with Older Teens and Higher Anxiety Both Rising

50.4% of teens 12-17 report 4+ hrs daily (NCHS 2023)

The NCHS Data Brief No. 516 found that 50.4% of U.S. teenagers ages 12 to 17 reported four or more hours of daily recreational screen time from July 2021 through December 2023. Older teens ages 15 to 17 reported this rate at 55.0%, compared to 45.6% for younger teens 12 to 14. The sex difference was not statistically significant. Parent education showed a larger gap: teens with a college-educated parent reported four-plus hours at 45.2%, compared to 55.0% for teens whose parent had some college or less. Among North Atlanta parents: 86% now call managing screen time a daily priority (Pew 2025), and 55% say they are extremely or very concerned about teen mental health today (Pew 2024). Notably, teens are catching up to their parents' concern: 45% of teens in 2024 say they spend too much time on social media — up from just 27% in 2023 — and 48% say social media has a mostly negative impact on people their age, up from 32% in 2022. That shift in teen self-awareness is significant. The conversation families need to have about screen time is becoming one that teenagers are increasingly prepared to have.

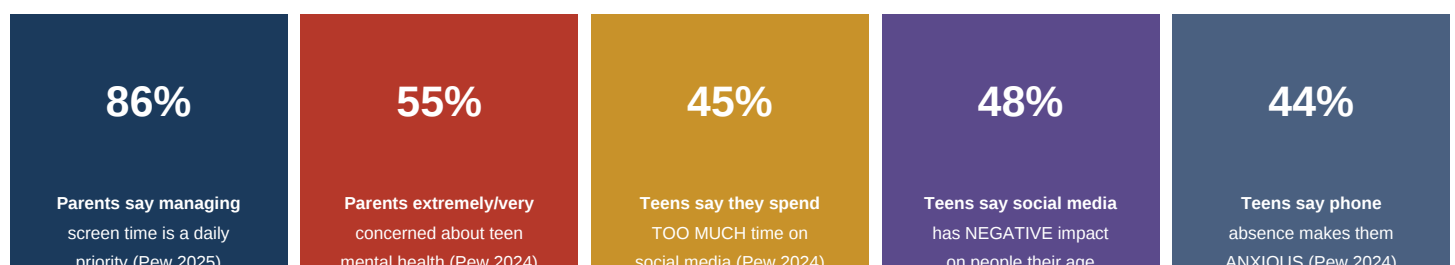
Teens Reporting 4+ Hours of Daily Recreational Screen Time — U.S. Breakdown



Source: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Data Brief No. 516, July 2021–December 2023. Recreational screen time excludes schoolwork. Sex difference (Boys 48.3% vs Girls 52.5%) not statistically significant. Metropolitan area classification: NCHS urban-rural classification scheme.

NCHS Data Brief No. 516, July 2021–December 2023. Pew parent concern data: 'How Parents Approach Their Kids' Screen Time' (Oct 2025); Pew teen self-assessment: 'Social Media and Teens' Mental Health' (April 2025). Recreational screen time excludes schoolwork.

What Parents and Teens Are Saying About Screen Time — Pew Research 2024-2025



ces: Pew Research Center 'How Parents Approach Their Kids' Screen Time' (Oct 2025); 'Social Media and Teens' Mental Health' (April 2025); 'How Teens and Parents Approach Screen Time' (Mar

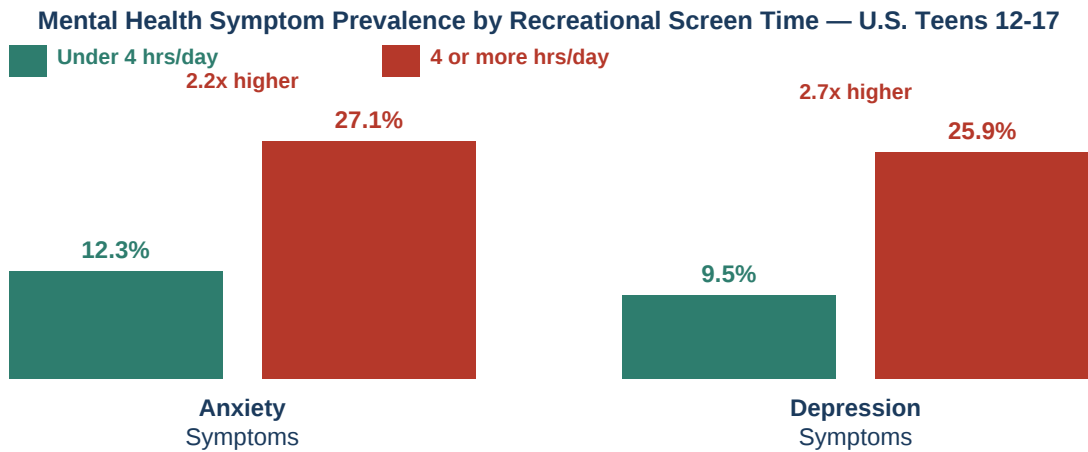
Parent and teen self-assessment data from Pew Research Center 2024-2025. 86% parent priority figure from Pew Oct 2025; 55% parent mental health concern from Pew Sept-Oct 2024 (N=1,391 parent-teen pairs). 45% 'too much social media' and 48% 'negative impact' from Pew April 2025.

Finding 3

High Screen Use Is Associated With Substantially Higher Rates of Anxiety and Depression Symptoms

2.2x anxiety 2.7x depression in high-screen vs. low-screen teens (NCHS)

The NCHS analysis documented anxiety symptom prevalence at 12.3% among teens with under four hours of screen time and 27.1% among teens with four or more hours — a 2.2-times relative difference. Depression symptom prevalence was 9.5% versus 25.9% — a 2.7-times relative difference. These are associations, not causal findings. The 2023 CDC YRBS MMWR Supplement confirms the broader adolescent mental health picture: 39.7% of U.S. high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, 28.5% experienced poor mental health, 20.4% seriously considered attempting suicide, and 9.5% attempted suicide. Compared to 2021, sadness and hopelessness declined modestly from 42% to 40% — a promising signal — but the 10-year trend from 2013 to 2023 still shows significant increases across virtually all mental health indicators. The 2023 YRBS also documented that among high-school students with frequent social-media use, higher proportions reported bullying, persistent sadness, and suicidal ideation. Among North Atlanta families, girls face disproportionate risk: Pew's 2025 research found girls are more likely to say they spend too much time on social media (32% vs. 22% for boys), and parents of girls are more worried than parents of boys about social media causing anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem.



Source: NCHS Data Brief No. 516 (July 2021–December 2023). Association does not establish causation.

Anxiety and depression symptoms = parent-reported recent symptoms. High-screen teens 2.2x more likely to report anxiety; 2.7x more likely to report depression.

Anxiety and depression: NCHS Data Brief No. 516 (July 2021–December 2023). YRBS 2023 national figures: 39.7% persistent sadness/hopelessness; 28.5% poor mental health; 20.4% considered suicide; 9.5% attempted suicide — CDC MMWR Supplement, October 2024. All findings are associations; causation not established.

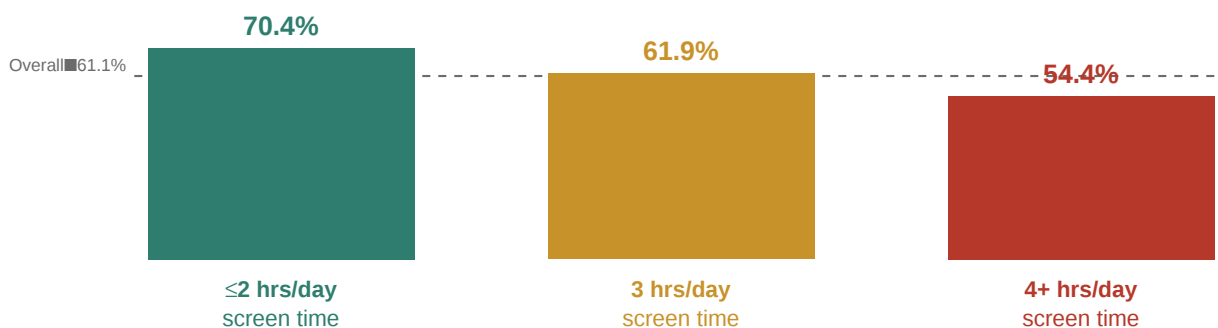
Finding 4

NEW: Screen Time and Physical Activity Show a Direct and Measurable Inverse Relationship

54.4% active with 4+ hrs screen vs. 70.4% with ≤2 hrs (NCHS Nov 2024)

A November 2024 NCHS QuickStats analysis — published in the same MMWR dataset as the anxiety and depression findings — documented a direct, graded inverse relationship between daily recreational screen time and physical activity among U.S. teens ages 12 to 17. Among teens with two or fewer hours of daily screen time, 70.4% met the physical activity guideline of 60 minutes most days or every day. Among those with three hours, 61.9% did. Among those with four or more hours of daily screen time, only 54.4% met the guideline — a 16-percentage-point gap compared to the low-screen group, and a 29% relative reduction in physical activity guideline compliance. This is not a causal finding: teens who are inactive may choose screen use as a time filler, rather than screens directly causing inactivity. But the magnitude of the association is consistent with the displacement framework: in a finite day, hours spent on screens reduce available time for movement. For North Atlanta families, this is particularly relevant in the context of Georgia's child health profile. Georgia ranks 37th nationally in child overweight and obesity rates, with 37.3% of Georgia children classified as overweight or obese according to Augusta University's 2024 Healthy Georgia Report. Nationally, NSCH 2023-2024 data shows 16.1% of youth ages 6 to 17 have obesity, with significant disparities by race: 23.0% for Black youth, 20.6% for Hispanic youth, and 12.8% for white youth. The displacement between screen use and physical activity is one of several contributing pathways.

% of U.S. Teens Aged 12-17 Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines, by Screen Time Level



Source: NCHS QuickStats, MMWR November 7, 2024 (DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7344a5). Physical activity = 60 minutes most days or every day. July 2021–December 2023. Dashed line = overall 61.1% average. Association does not establish causation; sedentary behavior and inactivity may both reflect shared underlying factors.

Physical activity data: NCHS QuickStats, MMWR November 7, 2024 (DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7344a5). Physical activity = 60 minutes most days or every day. Georgia obesity context: Augusta University Healthy Georgia Report 2024 (37.3% overweight+obese); State of Childhood Obesity / NSCH 2023-2024 (16.1% national obesity rate ages 6-17). Racial disparities in obesity: State of Childhood Obesity (Black 23.0%, Hispanic 20.6%, White 12.8%).

Finding 5

Sleep Is the Most Clearly Documented Pathway Between Screen Use and Child Health

Screens displace bedtime; disrupt onset, duration, and quality (2025 systematic review)

A 2025 systematic review found a robust association between higher screen exposure and adverse sleep outcomes, with adolescents identified as especially vulnerable. The mechanisms are well-documented: screens displace bedtime routines; notifications interrupt sleep; emotionally stimulating content delays relaxation; bright light affects sleep timing; and devices in bedrooms create proximity that most adolescents cannot self-regulate. Among U.S. high school students, only 23.5% reported getting sufficient sleep during the January-June 2021 period — a figure that has not significantly improved. A 2023 CDC chronic disease study found that poor sleep quality mediates the relationship between screen use and both anxiety and depression — meaning sleep may be the pathway through which high screen use produces the mental health associations documented in Finding 3. The AAP's 2026 guidance specifically identifies phone-free bedrooms and no screens one hour before bed as the highest-priority family media management strategies — a recommendation that converges with Georgia's HB 340 school-day phone ban, which addresses the in-school screen-sleep disruption that after-school hours only compound. Pew Research's 2024 data found that 40% of parent-teen pairs regularly argue about phone time — a figure that reflects how difficult family-level management has become in the absence of consistent external structure.

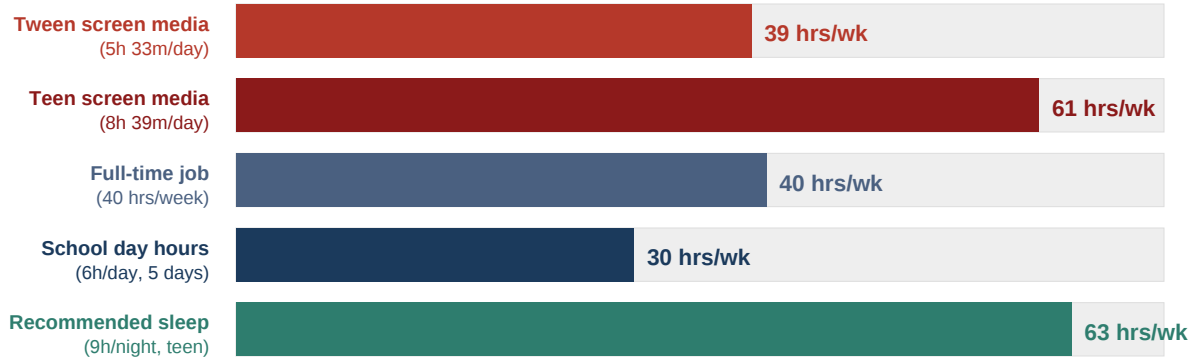
Finding 6

The Central Issue Is What High Screen Use Displaces — Not Simply How Many Hours It Consumes

A tween on 5h 33m/day spends 39 hrs/ week on screens — a full-time job

The American Academy of Pediatrics' 2026 guidance emphasizes quality, developmental context, content, and what media use displaces rather than a single time limit. A tween averaging 5 hours and 33 minutes of entertainment screen use daily spends approximately 38.85 hours per week on those activities. A teen averaging 8 hours and 39 minutes daily spends approximately 60.55 hours per week. These calculated comparisons are not medical thresholds — they become clinically significant when the time occupied replaces sleep, physical activity, reading, homework, face-to-face social interaction, creative activity, or family connection. The physical activity finding in Finding 4 — 70.4% activity rate for low-screen teens vs. 54.4% for high-screen teens — provides empirical support for the displacement framework: the hours are going somewhere, and at least some of them are coming from physical activity time. The YRBS documentation that not getting enough sleep, skipping breakfast, and not engaging in physical activity are all associated with poorer mental health outcomes creates a cluster of displaced health-supporting behaviors that co-occur with high screen use.

Weekly Hours — Screen Media vs. Key Childhood Activities (Calculated)



Weekly screen hours calculated from Common Sense Media daily averages x 7 days. Not a medical threshold.
Comparison activities for context only. Screen time and other activities are not fully mutually exclusive.

Weekly screen hours calculated from Common Sense Media daily averages x 7 days. Comparison activities for scale only. Physical activity displacement finding from NCHS MMWR Nov 2024. Sleep displacement: 2025 systematic review and AAP 2026 guidance. YRBS 2023 MMWR Supplement: skipping breakfast, sleep, and physical inactivity all independently associated with poorer mental health.

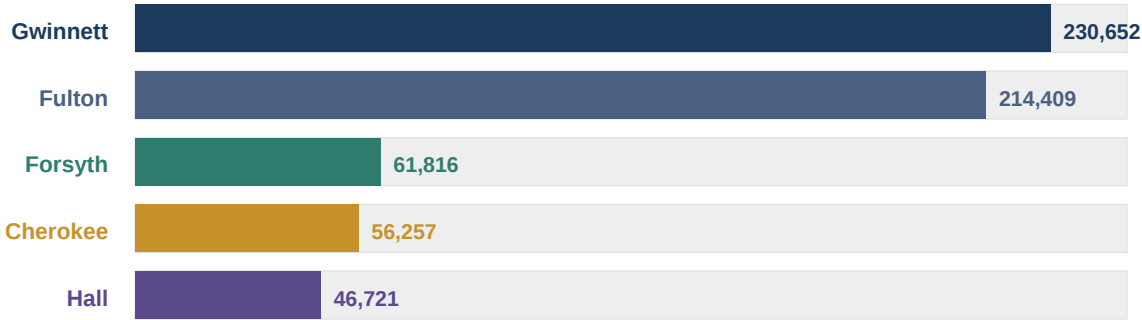
Finding 7

North Atlanta's Six-County Area:
615,000+ Children and 394,000+ Enrolled Students

**394,406 enrolled K-12 students in 6 districts;
615,322 children 0-17**

The six-county study area contains an estimated 615,322 children under age 18, based on 2020 Census population and current age percentage estimates. An independent enrollment verification from the six school districts confirms the scale: Gwinnett County Public Schools (the largest district in Georgia and 14th largest in the United States) enrolled approximately 182,000 students in 2023-24; Fulton County School System projects 86,031 for 2025-26; Forsyth County Schools enrolled 54,984 in 2023-24; Cherokee County School District enrolled 41,891 in 2022-23; Hall County Schools serves approximately 24,000 students; and Dawson County School District serves approximately 5,500 — a six-district total of approximately 394,000 enrolled K-12 students. This enrollment figure is independently verifiable and more current than Census estimates. The six-county area is also among the most digitally connected in Georgia: more than 94% of Gwinnett County households hold broadband subscriptions, and more than 98% have a computer. Forsyth County's household income profile — \$151,031 median, the highest in Georgia — means many households have multiple high-speed connected devices per child. The access question in North Atlanta is settled. The management question is not.

Estimated Children Under Age 18 by County — Six-County North Atlanta Study Area



SIX-COUNTY TOTAL: ~615,322 CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18

Source: 2020 U.S. Census population x Census QuickFacts % under age 18. Actual 2026 totals are higher due to post-2020 population growth. Calculated estimates, not direct 2026 Census counts. See school enrollment data in this report for an independent verification of school-age population.

Child population: 2020 Census x QuickFacts % under 18. School enrollment: GCPS (~182K, 2023-24); Fulton County Schools (~86,031, 2025-26 proj.); Forsyth County Schools (54,984, 2023-24 — Wikipedia); Cherokee County (41,891, 2022-23 — Wikipedia); Hall County (~24,000 est.); Dawson County (~5,500 est.).

FINDING 8: WHAT NORTH ATLANTA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE DOING — GEORGIA'S DISTRACTION-FREE EDUCATION ACT IN ACTION

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed House Bill 340 — the Distraction-Free Education Act — on May 9, 2025. The law requires all public K-8 schools in Georgia to implement a bell-to-bell ban on personal electronic devices, including smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, headphones, and laptops, effective July 1, 2026. High school device policy was not addressed in the state law — individual districts are responsible for determining high school policies independently.

The law reflects growing recognition among Georgia policymakers of the research documented in this study. Forsyth County Schools Superintendent James Mitchell Young stated publicly that once school officials are presented with the data on screen time and student outcomes, 'it would be negligent not to do anything about it.' Cherokee County had already implemented restrictions before the state law was passed. Gwinnett County's Board of Education approved K-8 restrictions in December 2025 but declined to extend them to high school, citing a desire to review additional parent feedback. Fulton County is still developing its implementation plan.

School District	Enrollment (most recent)	HB 340 Response	Status
Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS)	~182,000 (2023-24) Largest in GA	K-8 bell-to-bell ban approved Dec 18, 2025. High school ban NOT approved; still under Board review for future policy cycle.	PARTIAL
Forsyth County Schools	~54,984 (2023-24) 5th largest in GA	PROACTIVE LEADER: Banned phones during full school day before HB 340 requirement. Supt. Young hosted 'Disconnect to Reconnect' town hall April 2025. Landline phones in every classroom for emergencies.	PROACTIVE
Fulton County School System	~86,031 (2025-26 proj.)	Still discussing enforcement and implementation as of May 2026. Plan to be compliant with state law by July 2026.	IN PROGRESS
Cherokee County School District	~41,891 (2022-23)	EARLY ADOPTER: Had phone restriction policy in place before state law. Cited by CBS Atlanta as district that 'knew we had to do something' and acted in 2024.	PROACTIVE
Hall County Schools	~24,000 (est.)	Implementing per state law requirements. Bell-to-bell ban for K-8 effective July 1, 2026.	COMPLIANT

Dawson County School District	~5,500 (est.)	Implementing per state law requirements by July 1, 2026.	COMPLIANT
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HB 340: Signed May 9, 2025; effective July 1, 2026. Applies to all Georgia public K-8 schools. Exceptions: students with IEPs or medical needs. Gwinnett policy: Board vote December 18, 2025 (WSB-TV). Forsyth policy: Appen Media July 2025; 'Disconnect to Reconnect' town hall April 2025. Cherokee early-adopter status: CBS Atlanta May 2026. AJC July 2026: multiple Atlanta metro districts also limiting classroom instructional screen time.

The school-day phone ban addresses one important window — but the research documents that most high recreational screen time occurs after school hours and in the bedroom before sleep. HB 340 is a meaningful policy intervention for the school day. The hours between 3pm and 10pm remain a family management question — which is where pediatric guidance is most needed and most actionable.

AAP 2026 GUIDANCE: WHAT PEDIATRICIANS RECOMMEND FOR SCREEN USE BY AGE

Age Group	AAP Recommendation	Key Rationale
Under 18 months	Avoid screen use other than video chatting	Brain development is most sensitive to human interaction at this age
18-24 months	High-quality programming only, with parent watching together	Young children learn best from human interaction; co-viewing helps connect content to real world
Ages 2-5	Limit to about 1 hour of high-quality content per day	Protect time for play, physical activity, sleep, reading, and face-to-face connection
Ages 6 and older	Consistent limits on time and type; no phones in bedrooms; no screens 1 hour before bed	Content quality, context, and displacement are more important than a single time threshold
All ages	Screen-free family meals; phone-free bedrooms; family media plan	Family routines matter as much as individual limits; structure reduces conflict
Adolescents	Protect sleep; maintain physical activity; support face-to-face friendships	Sleep, movement, and social connection are the primary displacement concerns at this stage

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2026 media guidance. AAP guidance for ages 6 and older emphasizes quality, context, developmental stage, and what media displaces over a single universal time limit. Family Media Plan tool available free at [healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan).

WHAT NORTH ATLANTA FAMILIES CAN DO — EVIDENCE-BASED STARTING POINTS

1

Keep devices out of bedrooms at night — this is the highest-priority single action.

The AAP's strongest recommendation converges with the sleep research: no phones or tablets in bedrooms at night. A device in the bedroom predicts later bedtimes, shorter sleep, and midnight notification checks. A charging station outside the bedroom — established as a household norm, not a punishment — removes the primary mechanism through which screens disrupt adolescent sleep. This single change is the most consistently evidence-supported family intervention in the published literature.

2

Protect physical activity time explicitly — the data shows screens compete with movement.

The NCHS 2024 finding that 70.4% of low-screen teens meet physical activity guidelines versus only 54.4% of high-screen teens means the activity gap is real and measurable. Families who schedule physical activity before unstructured screen time — rather than after — report lower conflict and more consistent follow-through. Sports, outdoor time, or family walks don't need to compete with screens if they're structurally protected in the day.

3

Make screen-free mealtimes a family norm, not a rule.

Meals without screens preserve face-to-face family interaction that research associates with better adolescent mental health outcomes. Pew's 2024 data found that 46% of teens say their parent is at least sometimes distracted by their phone when the teen is trying to talk to them. Distraction-free meals model the behavior parents want to teach — and address the parental screen use pattern that teens notice and report.

4

Talk to your pediatrician about a family media plan at the next well visit.

The AAP provides a free Family Media Plan at [healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan). Having a plan reduces parent-child conflict about screens because boundaries are established in advance. At One Family Pediatrics, we address screen time, sleep, physical activity, and mental health as connected components of well-being — not as isolated topics. These are clinical conversations worth having, especially for parents who feel like they're losing the battle: 86% of parents share that concern, and evidence-based strategies are available.

THE DATA: NORTH ATLANTA CHILDREN'S SCREEN TIME REFERENCE 2026

Data Point	Figure	Source
Average daily screen: children ages 5-8	3h 28m	Common Sense Media 2025 Census
Average daily screen: tweens ages 8-12	5h 33m	Common Sense Media national census
Average daily screen: teens ages 13-18	8h 39m	Common Sense Media national census
NSCH 2022: children reporting 4+ hrs/day (all ages 6-17)	22.2%	NSCH 2022 national
NSCH 2022: children reporting 2 hrs/day (all ages 6-17)	28.4%	NSCH 2022 national
U.S. teens 12-17 reporting 4+ hrs/day recreational	50.4%	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
Teens ages 15-17 reporting 4+ hrs/day	55.0%	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
Anxiety symptoms: under 4 hrs/day screen teens	12.3%	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
Anxiety symptoms: 4+ hrs/day screen teens	27.1% (2.2x higher)	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
Depression symptoms: under 4 hrs/day screen teens	9.5%	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
Depression symptoms: 4+ hrs/day screen teens	25.9% (2.7x higher)	NCHS Data Brief No. 516
NEW: Physical activity rate — ≤2 hrs screen teens	70.4%	NCHS MMWR Nov 7, 2024

NEW: Physical activity rate — 4+ hrs screen teens	54.4% (29% lower)	NCHS MMWR Nov 7, 2024
YRBS 2023: persistent sadness/hopelessness (national)	39.7% (down from 42% in 2021)	CDC MMWR Supp Oct 2024
YRBS 2023: poor mental health (national)	28.5%	CDC MMWR Supp Oct 2024
YRBS 2023: seriously considered attempting suicide	20.4%	CDC MMWR Supp Oct 2024
U.S. teens online 'almost constantly' (Pew 2024)	~46%	Pew Research Center 2024
NEW: Parents: managing screen time is daily priority	86%	Pew Research Center Oct 2025
NEW: Teens who say they spend too much on social media	45% (up from 27% in 2023)	Pew April 2025
NEW: Teens: phone absence makes them anxious	44%	Pew March 2024
NEW: Teens: social media has negative impact on peers	48% (up from 32% in 2022)	Pew April 2025
Georgia child overweight+obese rate	37.3% (ranked 37th nationally)	Augusta Univ / GPB Feb 2024
NEW: National youth obesity rate ages 6-17 (NSCH 2023-24)	16.1%	State of Childhood Obesity
National obesity by race: Black youth	23.0%	NSCH 2023-24 / State of Childhood Obesity
National obesity by race: Hispanic youth	20.6%	NSCH 2023-24 / State of Childhood Obesity
Six-county children under 18 (est.)	~615,322	2020 Census x QuickFacts
NEW: Gwinnett County Public Schools enrollment	~182,000 (2023-24)	Wikipedia / GCPS
NEW: Forsyth County Schools enrollment	54,984 (2023-24)	Wikipedia
NEW: Fulton County School System enrollment	86,031 (2025-26 projected)	Fulton County Schools
NEW: Cherokee County School District enrollment	41,891 (2022-23)	Wikipedia
NEW: Six-district total K-12 enrollment	~394,406	District data combined
NEW: Georgia HB 340 signed	May 9, 2025 by Gov. Kemp	GA Legislature
NEW: HB 340 effective date	July 1, 2026 (K-8 bell-to-bell)	GA Legislature
Gwinnett broadband subscription rate	94.6%	Census ACS 2023
Gwinnett computer in household	98.4%	Census ACS 2023

Red rows: national screen time and mental health figures. Green rows: new physical activity data (NCHS MMWR Nov 2024). Amber rows: new parent and teen self-assessment data. Blue rows: Georgia HB 340 law data. NEW = data added in enhanced edition. All associations are observational; none establish causation.

About One Family Pediatrics

One Family Pediatrics provides comprehensive pediatric care for children and adolescents across Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Dawson, Cherokee, and Fulton counties. We address screen time, sleep, mental health, physical activity, and digital media habits as integrated components of child and adolescent well-being. If you have questions about your child's screen use, sleep patterns, physical activity, or emotional health, bring them to your next well-child visit. With Georgia's Distraction-Free Education Act now in effect for K-8 students, and ongoing discussion about high school policies, these conversations are more timely than ever.

Serving North Atlanta families across Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Dawson, Cherokee, and Fulton Counties

onefamilypediatrics.com | [Schedule a well-child visit today](#)

METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS & SOURCES

This report synthesizes published national survey data, peer-reviewed research, Georgia state-level policy documentation, and North Atlanta school district enrollment data. There is no county-level survey directly measuring recreational screen time for children in Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Dawson, Cherokee, or Fulton counties. Where national rates are applied to local population estimates, those calculations are explicitly labeled as modeled estimates, not direct measurements. Child population figures use the 2020 Census base with current QuickFacts age percentages applied; actual 2026 figures are higher due to post-2020 growth. School enrollment data from the most recent published district figures; Hall and Dawson are estimates. All associations between screen time and health outcomes are observational; this report does not establish causal relationships. 'Associated with' is used throughout; 'causes' is not. This report does not constitute medical advice for any individual child.

NCHS. Olsen EO, et al. 'Recreational Screen Time Among U.S. Adolescents.' NCHS Data Brief No. 516. 2024. Primary source: 4+ hour threshold; anxiety/depression by screen group (July 2021-Dec 2023).

cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db516.htm

NCHS. QuickStats: Physical Activity by Screen Time. MMWR November 7, 2024. DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7344a5. NEW: 70.4% (≤ 2 hrs) vs 54.4% (4+ hrs) physical activity guideline compliance.

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11542771

CDC. 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey MMWR Supplement. October 10, 2024. 39.7% persistent sadness; 28.5% poor mental health; 20.4% considered suicide; 9.5% attempted.

cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/su7304a9.htm

Common Sense Media. 2025 Common Sense Census: Media Use by Kids Ages 0-8. Ages 0-8: 2h 20m; ages 5-8: 3h 28m.

commonsensemedia.org

Common Sense Media. The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens. Tweens 8-12: 5h 33m; teens 13-18: 8h 39m; 2019-2021 +17%.

commonsensemedia.org

Pew Research Center. 'How Parents Approach Their Kids' Screen Time.' October 2025. NEW: 86% of parents say managing screen time is daily priority; 42% call it biggest priority.

pewresearch.org

Pew Research Center. 'Social Media and Teens' Mental Health.' April 2025. NEW: 45% of teens say they spend too much on social media (up from 27% in 2023); 48% say negative impact on peers (up from 32%); 55% of parents extremely/very concerned.

pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-health

Pew Research Center. 'How Teens and Parents Approach Screen Time.' March 2024. 44% of teens anxious without phone; 40% of parent-teen pairs argue about phone time.

pewresearch.org/internet/2024/03/11/how-teens-and-parents-approach-screen-time

Pew Research Center. Teens, Social Media and Technology 2024. December 2024. YouTube 73% daily; TikTok 63%; ~46% online almost constantly.

pewresearch.org/internet/2024/12/12/teens-social-media-and-technology-2024

Georgia HB 340 — Distraction-Free Education Act. Signed May 9, 2025. NEW: K-8 bell-to-bell ban effective July 1, 2026. High school not addressed in state law.

gov.georgia.gov

Forsyth County Schools. Phone policy and HB 340 response. July 2025. NEW: Proactive leader; full school day ban; Supt. Young quote on data-driven action.

appenmedia.com/forsyth/forsyth-county-schools-bans-phones-in-class

WSB-TV. 'Gwinnett County passes cellphone ban.' December 19, 2025. NEW: K-8 ban approved; high school ban not approved; still under Board discussion.

[wsbtv.com](https://www.wsbtv.com)

CBS Atlanta. 'Georgia school systems planning high school cellphone ban.' May 2026. NEW: Cherokee as early adopter; Fulton still discussing; Marietta results cited.

[cbsnews.com/atlanta](https://www.cbsnews.com/atlanta)

AJC. 'These Georgia school districts are curbing classroom screen time.' July 2026. NEW: Atlanta Public Schools and Marietta limiting instructional screen time beyond phones.

[ajc.com](https://www.ajc.com)

American Academy of Pediatrics. Media and Technology Use Guidelines. 2026. Age-based recommendations; displacement framework; bedroom phone guidance.

[healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan)

State of Childhood Obesity / NSCH 2023-2024. NEW: National 16.1% obesity rate ages 6-17; racial disparities.

stateofchildhoodobesity.org/demographic-data/ages-6-17

Augusta University / GPB. Healthy Georgia Report. February 2024. NEW: Georgia 37.3% child overweight+obese; ranked 37th nationally.

[gpb.org/news/2024/02/06](https://www.gpb.org/news/2024/02/06)

GCPS. Student electronic devices policy. [gcpsk12.org](https://www.gcpsk12.org). NEW: Bell-to-Bell Brilliance commitment; Board vote Dec 18 2025.

[gcpsk12.org/families/student-electronic-devices](https://www.gcpsk12.org/families/student-electronic-devices)

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Census; QuickFacts 2025. County population totals and % under age 18.

[census.gov/quickfacts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts)

SURVEY ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY: This report would be significantly strengthened by an original anonymous parent survey of North Atlanta families (300-500 responses) documenting local screen habits, bedtime device use, family media plans, and parent concerns. Such a survey would transform the study's primary finding from 'national research suggests...' to 'we surveyed X North Atlanta families and found...' — creating genuinely original, locally newsworthy data that no other source can replicate.