



Healthy Early Development and Screen Time Act At a Glance

Effective: January 1, 2027

Purpose:

The Healthy Early Development and Screen Time Act (Act 2026-169) established a statewide framework for healthy screen time practices in covered early childhood education programs. It directs the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE), in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), to develop research-based guidelines, screen time standards, and annual training requirements.

Who is covered?

Oversight entity	Covered programs
Alabama Department of Human Resources	*Licensed child care facilities serving children five years of age and younger: day care centers, day care homes, group day care homes, and night care facilities.
Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education	**Prekindergarten programs operating under Article 2.
Alabama State Department of Education & local boards of education	*Public kindergarten programs.

*Also included: any afterschool, extended day, or summer program provided by a covered facility or program.

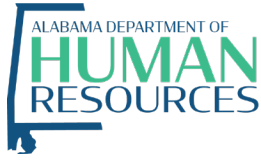
**First Class Pre-K

[Act 2026-169 references: §26-24-60\(3\) and \(5\)](#)

What the law requires

- Research-based guidelines on healthy screen time practices for families of children from birth through five years of age.
- Screen time standards based on current evidence-based research and practices for programs that include:
 - Age-appropriate screen time limits, with no screen time allowed for students under two years of age.
 - Guidelines within the screen time standards for determining high-quality programming.
 - Best practices within the screen time standards for screen use in early education settings identified in Act 2026-169.
- Annual training on screen time standards and alternatives to screen time for teachers and staff members who closely supervise children in each covered licensed child care, prekindergarten, and kindergarten program. The training must meet the requirements of Act 2026-169 and align with the screen time standards.
- Each covered program must implement a screen time policy, which meets the requirements of Act 2026-169 and reflects the screen time standards.

[Act 2026-169 references: §§26-24-61 through 26-24-65; §§16-40-15 and 38-7-7.1](#)



What may not happen

- Screen time may not be allowed for students under two years of age.
- Screen-based media may not be unreasonably used as a substitute for teacher-led instruction, reading, hands-on learning, or outdoor play.
- Background television and passive screen time are prohibited.
- Screen-based media use must not occur without active staff supervision.
- Screen-based media may not be used outside the screen time standards established by the ADECE in collaboration with DHR and ALSDE.

Act 2026-169 references: §26-24-62(a)-(b); §26-24-63(1)

Exceptions to screen time requirements

- Screen time of a student acting pursuant to the student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Health Plan.
- Screen time by a kindergarten student necessary to complete required diagnostic tests and assessments.
- Screen time by a student enrolled in classes offered as part of a virtual school or virtual program approved by a local board of education.

Act 2026-169 references: §26-24-62(c)