BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

Screens for Road Trips — Downloading Movies & Keeping Kids Happy

Downloading movies and shows before you leave to keep the grandkids happy

An Extended Guide · No. 1941

An Extended Guide · No. 1941

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit — billshometech.com/book

What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

1. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 5

2. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 6

3. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 7

4. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 8

5. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 8

6. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 9

7. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 10

8. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 11

9. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 12

10. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 13

11. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 14

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

12. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 15

13. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 16

14. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 17

15. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 18

16. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 19

17. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 20

18. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 21

19. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 22

20. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 23

21. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 24

22. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 25

23. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech 25

A Picture to Follow Along 26

A Second Look 27

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

A Note From Bill **27**

Your Visit — and My Promise **28**

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

1. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

What's Inside Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now..... 4

1. The 60-Second Version..... 4
2. Download Before You Leave..... 5
3. Why Downloading Beats Streaming..... 6
4. Downloading from Netflix..... 6
5. Downloading from Disney Plus..... 7
6. Downloading from Max..... 7
7. Downloading from Amazon Prime Video..... 8
8. Downloading from YouTube..... 8
9. Where Your Downloads Live..... 9
10. How Much Room You'll Need..... 9
11. Download the Night Before..... 10
12. A Kids' Tablet: Amazon Fire Kids..... 10
13. Parental Controls and Kids Plus..... 11
14. Setting Content Limits..... 11
15. Setting Screen-Time Limits..... 12
16. Volume-Limiting Kids' Headphones..... 12
17. A Headphone Splitter for Two..... 13
18. Seat-Back Tablet Mounts..... 13
19. Offline Games..... 14
20. Audiobooks and Podcasts..... 14
21. Download Offline Maps Too

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

2. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

..... 15 22. Watch Your Data on a Hotspot..... 15 23. Keeping Tablets Charged..... 16 24. A Power Bank for the Back Seat..... 16 25. A Pre-Trip Download Checklist..... 17 26. Divide Content by Child..... 17 27. Avoiding Meltdowns and Sore Eyes..... 18 28. Music for the Whole Car..... 18 29. Clean Up Downloads After the Trip..... 19 30. Older Grandkids and Their Own Phones..... 19 31. The Whole Plan at a Glance..... 20 32. Picking a Tablet and a Tough Case..... 21 33. Family Link and Screen Time..... 22 34. Free Shows from the Library..... 22 35. When to Call Bill..... 23 Everyday Cheat Sheet..... 24 A Picture to Follow Along..... 25 A Second Look..... 25 A Note From Bill..... 26 Your Visit — and My Promise

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

START HERE

3. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

1. The 60-Second Version If you only read one page, read this one. The whole secret to a peaceful drive with grandkids is this: download the movies and shows onto the tablet at home, on your Wi-Fi, before you leave. Once they're downloaded, they play with no internet needed and no data charges, even out on roads with no signal. Nearly every app, Netflix, Disney+, Max, Amazon, and YouTube, lets you do this. Add a pair of kids' headphones, a way for two to share, and a charged tablet, and you've got hours of happy, quiet back seat. Do the downloading the night before, because it takes a little time and a good Wi-Fi connection. Download shows at home on Wi-Fi, not on the road. Downloads play with no internet and no data use. Look for a Downloads section in each app. Charge the tablets fully the night before. Kids' headphones and a splitter keep the peace. WATCH OUT Set all of this up at home while parked or indoors. Hand the kids a ready-to-go tablet; don't fiddle with it while you're driving. THE IDEA 2. Download Before You Leave The one habit that makes the whole trip work. Here's the single most important idea in this whole guide, so I'll say it plainly. Streaming, which means playing a video over the internet as it goes, needs a constant internet connection and uses up data the whole time. Downloading, on the other hand, copies the whole movie onto the tablet ahead of time, so it plays from the tablet itself with no internet at all. For a road trip, downloading wins every time. It works in dead zones where there's no signal, it doesn't cost you a penny in data, and it never stutters or buffers. The only catch is you have to do it before you leave, on your home Wi-Fi, because downloading is the part that uses the connection. I cannot stress enough how much calmer this makes a trip. Streaming on the road, over your phone's signal, is where the trouble starts: the show freezes just as the car enters a valley with no bars, a child wails, and you're tempted to glance back at exactly the wrong

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

GOOD TO KNOW

4. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

moment. Downloads sidestep all of that. Once the movies are saved onto the tablet, the car could drive clear across the country with no signal at all and every show would still play perfectly. It's the single best thing you can do for a peaceful drive, and it only takes an evening of preparation the night before. Think of it like packing snacks for the trip. You load up the tablet at home, and then the kids can enjoy it anywhere, no store needed along the way. WHY 3. Why Downloading Beats Streaming Save the data, skip the buffering. If the kids stream movies over your phone's data on a long drive, two things go wrong. First, video eats data fast, and a couple of movies can chew through a whole month's allowance, leading to a nasty surprise on the bill or a throttled, slowed-down connection. Second, out on rural highways the signal comes and goes, so a streamed show freezes and buffers maddeningly, which is exactly when a tired child melts down. Downloaded shows have neither problem. They don't touch your data, and they play smoothly whether you've got five bars or none. That's why I always steer families toward downloading. It's less hassle on the road and far kinder to your wallet. Streaming video uses a lot of data, fast. Downloads use zero data once they're saved. Streaming buffers and freezes where signal is weak. Downloads play smoothly even with no signal at all.

APPS

5. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

4. Downloading from Netflix Look for the little download arrow. Netflix makes downloading easy, and most of its kids' shows and movies can be saved. Open the Netflix app on the tablet, find the show or movie you want, and look for a download symbol, usually a little downward arrow, on the title's page. For a series, you can download individual episodes or sometimes a whole season. Tap the arrow and it starts saving; you'll see a progress indicator. Once it's done, that title will have a checkmark or say Downloaded. It's smart to download several episodes of a favorite show plus a couple of movies, so there's plenty of choice. Do this at home, because downloading is what uses the Wi-Fi.

1. Open the Netflix app and sign in at home.
2. Find the show or movie you want.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

3 Tap the download arrow on its page.
4 Wait for it to finish, shown by a checkmark. APPS 5. Downloading from Disney Plus A grandkid favorite, easy to save. Disney+ is often the big winner with grandkids, full of the movies and shows they love, and nearly everything on it can be downloaded. The process is the same friendly pattern. Open the Disney+ app, find the title, and tap the download arrow. For series you can grab a whole season at once, which is handy for a long trip. Disney+ even has a setting to download at higher or lower quality; the lower, called standard, saves space and downloads faster, and on a tablet screen it still looks just fine. If storage on the tablet gets tight, choosing the lower quality lets you fit more shows, which is usually the better trade for a car ride. TIP In Disney+ settings, choosing the standard, lower-quality download fits more shows on the tablet and still looks great on a small screen.

APPS

6. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

6. Downloading from Max The same simple arrow to tap. Max, the service with a big library including plenty of family and children's titles, also lets you download most of its shows and movies for offline watching. Open the Max app, find what you want, and look for the download option, again usually a downward arrow. Tap it to save the title to the tablet. As with the others, download several things before you leave so the kids have variety, since nothing's worse than running out of entertainment an hour from home. The pattern across all these apps is really the same, which is good news: once you've learned to download on one, you can do it on any of them. GOOD TO KNOW Downloads on these apps usually stay available as long as your subscription is active and you open the app now and then. They don't vanish mid-trip. APPS 7. Downloading from Amazon Prime Video Especially handy on a Fire tablet. Amazon Prime Video, which comes with an Amazon Prime membership, lets you download many of its movies and shows too, and it works especially smoothly on an Amazon Fire tablet since they're made by the same company. Open the Prime Video app, find a title, and tap the download arrow. Not every title can be downloaded, as it depends on the movie studio's rules, but most children's content can. Look for the download symbol to know for sure. If your family already has Amazon Prime for the shipping, this is entertainment you're likely already paying for, so it's worth using. Download a good batch before the trip and you're set.

1 Open the Prime Video app and sign in at home.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

2 Find a movie or show.
3 Tap the download arrow if it's offered.
4 Check for the Downloaded label when it's done.

APPS

7. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

8. Downloading from YouTube This one needs a paid membership. YouTube is a bit different. To download YouTube videos for offline watching, you generally need YouTube Premium, which is a paid monthly membership. With it, you'll see a download option under a video, and once saved, it plays without internet. Without Premium, YouTube won't let you download, and the kids would be streaming and using data. There's also a separate YouTube Kids app, which is a safer, child-friendly version with parental controls, and it offers downloads with that same Premium membership. If your grandkids live on YouTube, the membership may be worth it for trips; if they mostly watch movies, you may not need it at all and can lean on the other apps. WATCH OUT Without YouTube Premium, the kids can't download and will be streaming over data. On a road trip that can add up fast, so plan around it. FIND THEM 9. Where Your Downloads Live Finding what you saved, in each app. Once you've downloaded things, you'll want to find them easily, especially to hand the tablet to a child who can then pick for themselves. In each app there's a Downloads area, and it's usually just a tap away. In Netflix, look for a Downloads icon along the bottom of the screen. In Disney+, it's under the profile or a download icon at the bottom. In Max and Prime Video, look for a Downloads section in the menu, often near your account or library. YouTube keeps downloads in your Library. The exact spot moves around a little as the apps change, but the word to hunt for is always Downloads. Once you find it, everything you saved is listed there, ready to play offline. App Where downloads live Netflix Downloads icon at the bottom Disney+ Download icon or under your profile Prime Video Downloads in the menu or library YouTube In your Library section

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

SPACE

8. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

10. How Much Room You'll Need Movies take up space, so plan a little. Downloaded movies take up storage space on the tablet, and a tablet can only hold so much. A single movie might take up a good chunk of room, more at high quality and less at standard. This is why choosing the standard, lower-quality download setting is usually smart for the car: it looks fine on a small screen and lets you fit far more shows. If the tablet warns that it's running low on space, you can delete a few things you've already watched to make room, or delete downloads from a previous trip you forgot about. Before a big trip, it's worth a glance to make sure there's enough room for everything you want to load up. TIP After a trip, delete the downloads you've finished with. It frees up space and keeps the tablet tidy for next time. TIMING 11. Download the Night Before Give it time and a strong connection. Downloading several movies takes time, sometimes a good while, depending on how fast your home internet is. So don't leave it for the morning you're rushing out the door. Do it the evening before, while the tablet sits on the kitchen counter connected to Wi-Fi and plugged in to charge. Start the downloads, then let them finish while you pack and get ready for bed. By morning everything's saved and the tablet's full. Trying to download at the last minute, or worse, on the way out the door off your phone's data, defeats the whole purpose. A calm evening download is the difference between a smooth trip and a frantic one.

1. The evening before, put the tablet on home Wi-Fi.
2. Plug it in to charge while it downloads.
3. Start all your downloads and let them finish overnight.
4. In the morning, confirm everything shows as Downloaded.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

TABLETS

9. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

12. A Kids' Tablet: Amazon Fire Kids A sturdy tablet built for little hands. If you don't want the grandkids on your own iPad or phone, a dedicated kids' tablet is a wonderful answer. The Amazon Fire Kids tablets are popular for good reason: they're inexpensive, they come in a thick rubbery case that survives being dropped, and they're built from the ground up for children. They come with strong parental controls and often include a subscription to Amazon Kids+, a library of children's shows, books, and games chosen to be age-appropriate. For grandparents, they're about as worry-free as it gets, because you don't have to hand over your expensive personal device, and the child can't easily stumble into things they shouldn't. Inexpensive and built to survive drops. Comes with a thick protective case. Strong parental controls built in. Often includes Amazon Kids+, a safe content library. TABLETS 13. Parental Controls and Kids Plus You decide what they can see and do. The best part of a kids' tablet is the control it gives you. On a Fire Kids tablet, you set up a child's profile, and within it you choose exactly what they can access. The Amazon Kids+ library only shows age-appropriate books, videos, and games, with no surprises. You can block the web browser entirely, approve specific apps, and keep them in a safe, walled garden where everything is suitable. This takes the worry out of handing a child a screen, because you're not hoping they behave; you've set the boundaries in advance. Setting up the profile takes a few minutes once, and then it just works every time they pick up the tablet. GOOD TO KNOW On a Fire Kids tablet, the child's profile is a safe, walled-off space. They can't wander onto the open internet unless you allow it.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

LIMITS

10. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

14. Setting Content Limits Keeping it age-appropriate and calm. Beyond a dedicated kids' tablet, every streaming app has a kids' mode or child profile too, and it's well worth setting up. In Netflix, Disney+, and the others, you can create a profile marked for a child, which filters out grown-up content and shows only what's suitable for their age. Set this up before the trip and make sure the download and watching happens inside that profile. That way, when you hand over the tablet, you're not worried about what they might scroll into. It's a simple bit of preparation that buys real peace of mind, letting you keep your eyes on the road instead of on the back seat. TIP Set up a kids' profile in each app and download inside it. Then the child only ever sees age-appropriate choices. LIMITS 15. Setting Screen-Time Limits A gentle cap so it's not all screens. Even on a long drive, you may not want the screen on every single minute, and both kids' tablets and regular tablets let you set time limits. On a Fire Kids tablet, you can set daily limits or bedtime cutoffs, and even require that the child reads or does learning activities before the fun unlocks. On an iPad, the Screen Time feature does much the same. You can set these before the trip so the tablet gently enforces the rules for you, no nagging required. It's a nice way to mix in some looking-out-the-window, a nap, or a game of I-spy, so the screen is a treat rather than the whole journey. Fire Kids tablets can set daily time limits and bedtimes. iPads use the Screen Time feature for the same thing. Set the limits before the trip so they're automatic. Mix in breaks, naps, and looking out the window.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

EARS

11. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

16. Volume-Limiting Kids' Headphones Protecting little ears, and your sanity. Headphones do two lovely things on a road trip: they protect the driver's peace and quiet, and they keep the sound out of a sleeping sibling's ears. For children, look specifically for volume-limiting headphones, which are made so they can't play loud enough to harm young ears, no matter how high the child turns it up. They come in fun colors and sturdy, kid-sized designs. This is genuinely important, because children's hearing is delicate and they don't always know when something's too loud. A good pair isn't expensive and lasts for years of trips. It's one of those small purchases that makes every drive more pleasant for everyone. WATCH OUT Ordinary headphones can go loud enough to damage a child's hearing. For kids, use headphones made to limit the volume. EARS 17. A Headphone Splitter for Two Two kids, one tablet, both can listen. When two grandkids want to watch the same movie on one tablet, a headphone splitter saves the day. It's a tiny, inexpensive adapter that plugs into the tablet's headphone jack and gives you two jacks instead of one, so two sets of headphones can plug in and both children hear the sound. No arguing over who holds the tablet or whose turn it is. Some splitters even offer more than two jacks for a whole row of cousins. If the tablet doesn't have a headphone jack, there are splitters that work with the charging-port style of plug, or you can use a small adapter; I can help you pick the right one for your particular tablet. TIP A splitter is one of the cheapest, most peacemaking items you can buy for a road trip. Two kids, one movie, zero arguments.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

MOUNTS

12. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

18. Seat-Back Tablet Mounts Hands-free watching, no sore arms. A seat-back tablet mount holds the tablet up on the back of the front headrest, right at the child's eye level, so nobody has to hold it for hours. These straps and holders are inexpensive and fit most tablets, and they make a surprising difference: the child watches comfortably, the tablet doesn't get dropped into the footwell every ten minutes, and little arms don't get tired. Look for one that grips the tablet firmly and adjusts to the right angle. It installs in a minute by looping around the headrest posts. For a family that road-trips often, it's one of the best few dollars you can spend on back-seat happiness. Clamps the tablet to the back of the front headrest. Keeps the tablet at the child's eye level. Saves tired arms and dropped tablets. Inexpensive and fits most tablet sizes. MORE 19. Offline Games Not every minute has to be a movie. Movies are great, but variety keeps children happier longer, and plenty of games work entirely offline once they're installed. Before the trip, download a few favorite games onto the tablet while you're on Wi-Fi, and test that they open and play without internet, since some games secretly need a connection. Puzzle games, coloring apps, and simple adventure games are good offline choices. On a kids' tablet, the Amazon Kids+ library includes many games already chosen to be safe. Mixing games with movies, and maybe an audiobook, means the kids aren't staring at the same thing for four hours straight, which keeps the whole back seat in better spirits. A nice trick is to let each grandchild pick a game or two they're excited about the night before, as part of the download routine. Children who helped choose their entertainment tend to be happier with it and less likely to declare, an hour in, that there's nothing to do. Puzzle and building games, simple racing games, and quiet coloring or sticker apps all work well for the car. Just steer clear of anything that constantly needs an internet connection to play, since those will stall out the moment the signal drops, which defeats the whole point of preparing ahead.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

GOOD TO KNOW

13. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Test games at home with the Wi-Fi turned off. Some games look offline but quietly need a connection, and you'll want to know before the drive. MORE 20. Audiobooks and Podcasts A rest for the eyes, a treat for the ears. Not everything needs a screen at all. Audiobooks and children's podcasts are wonderful for the car, especially for little ones who get carsick looking at a screen, and they give everyone's eyes a rest. Apps like Audible, the library's Libby app, and many podcast apps let you download audio ahead of time so it plays offline. A good story read aloud can hold a child's attention for a long stretch, and the whole car can enjoy it together. Download a few children's audiobooks or podcast episodes before you leave, the same way you do movies, and keep them ready as a nice change of pace when eyes get tired of the screen. Audiobooks and podcasts give eyes a rest. Great for children who get carsick watching screens. Download them ahead of time so they play offline. The library's Libby app offers free audiobooks. MORE 21. Download Offline Maps Too While you're at it, save your route. While you're downloading entertainment, take a moment to download the map for your route too, so your own navigation keeps working even where there's no signal. Both Google Maps and Apple Maps let you save a map area to your phone while on Wi-Fi, and then it guides you with no connection needed. This is a real help on long trips through rural areas where the signal drops. It's the same principle as the movies: do the downloading at home, enjoy it offline on the road. One evening of preparation, and both the grandkids' shows and your own directions are ready to work anywhere the trip takes you. TIP Download your trip's map area on home Wi-Fi before you go. Your directions then keep working through every dead zone along the way.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

DATA

14. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

22. Watch Your Data on a Hotspot If you do stream, keep an eye on it. Sometimes you'll end up streaming anyway, maybe the kids want something you didn't download, and you turn your phone into a hotspot so the tablet can use its internet. That's fine now and then, but keep an eye on it, because streaming video over a hotspot uses your phone's data quickly and can lead to overage charges or a slowed-down connection. If you do this, prefer streaming at a lower quality to use less data, and don't let it run all day. The far better plan, as always, is to download ahead of time so you're not relying on the hotspot at all. But it's good to know the option exists for the occasional gap. WATCH OUT A hotspot uses your phone's data allowance. A few streamed movies can blow through it fast, so lean on downloads instead whenever you can. POWER 23. Keeping Tablets Charged A dead tablet is a sad back seat. Nothing ends the back-seat peace faster than a tablet dying two hours in. So plan for power. Charge every tablet fully the night before. For the drive itself, a car charger that plugs into the car's power socket keeps tablets topped up, and a splitter adapter lets you charge more than one at once. A portable power bank, charged at home, is a great backup, especially if the car only has one charging spot. Bring the right charging cables for your tablets, and keep them handy. With a full charge to start and a way to top up on the road, you'll never hear the dreaded cry that the tablet's dead and the movie stopped. One small thing that trips families up is the cable. A tablet charges much faster with the right cable and a proper charger, and slowly or not at all with the wrong one. Playing a movie while charging also draws more power, so a weak charger may barely keep up. If you find a tablet draining even while plugged in, that's usually a sign of a tired cable or an underpowered car charger rather than anything wrong with the tablet. Pack a known-good cable for each device, label them if you can, and you'll avoid the back-seat mystery of why the tablet won't charge.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

POWER

15. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Charge all tablets fully the night before.

A car charger keeps them topped up on the road. A splitter lets you charge two tablets at once. A power bank is a good backup for a long drive. 24. A Power Bank for the Back Seat Portable power when the car ports run out. If you've got more devices than charging ports, a portable power bank is the easy answer. It's a battery you charge at home, then it refills tablets and phones from the back seat with no cord to the front. Hand it to an older grandchild or tuck it in a seat pocket with a cable, and it keeps a tablet alive for hours more. A bank around 10,000 to 20,000 milliamp-hours, often shortened to mAh, will refill a tablet a couple of times over. Charge it the night before along with everything else, and it earns its keep on any long trip, as well as being a handy thing to have in the car in general. GOOD TO KNOW A power bank you already keep in the car for emergencies doubles nicely as back-seat power on a road trip. One device, two jobs. CHECKLIST 25. A Pre-Trip Download Checklist Everything to do the night before. Here's the whole evening-before routine in one list. Run through it after supper the night before you leave, and the morning will be calm and the back seat will be happy. Print it and keep it with your trip things, so it's a simple matter of ticking each item off.

1. Connect the tablets to home Wi-Fi and plug them in to charge.
2. Open each streaming app and download your chosen movies and shows.
3. Set downloads to standard quality to fit more and save space.
4. Download a few offline games and test them with Wi-Fi off.
5. Download children's audiobooks or podcasts.
6. Download your trip's map area in Google or Apple Maps.
7. Check kids' profiles and screen-time limits are set.
8. Pack headphones, a splitter, the seat-back mount, and chargers.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

PEACE

16. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

26. Divide Content by Child Head off the 'that's not fair' before it starts. If you've got more than one grandchild, a little planning heads off squabbles. Where you can, give each child their own profile or their own tablet, loaded with the shows they like best, so nobody's stuck watching a sibling's choice. If they're sharing one tablet, download a mix that suits both, and maybe plan whose turn to pick comes when. Letting each child help choose their downloads the night before gets them excited and invested. It's a small bit of forethought that prevents a lot of the back-seat bickering that can wear a driver down. Happy, fairly treated kids make for a far more relaxed trip for the grown-ups up front. WATCH OUT Let each grandchild help pick their own downloads the night before. They feel included, and you avoid the squabble over whose show plays first. PEACE 27. Avoiding Meltdowns and Sore Eyes Screens are a tool, not the whole trip. A few gentle habits keep the screen a happy thing rather than a source of trouble. Turn the brightness down a bit, which is easier on young eyes and saves battery. Plan screen breaks, so eyes and minds get a rest: a stop at a rest area, a snack, a song everyone sings together, or a window game. Watch for signs of carsickness, which screens can bring on, and switch to an audiobook if a child goes quiet and pale. And keep a few non-screen things handy too, like a coloring book or a small toy. Used this way, with breaks and balance, the tablets make the miles fly by without anyone arriving frazzled. Turn the brightness down to rest young eyes. Plan screen breaks at stops and snack times. Switch to audio if a child seems carsick. Keep a coloring book or small toy as a change of pace.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

MUSIC

17. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

28. Music for the Whole Car Download a playlist everyone enjoys. Sometimes the best back-seat peace is a sing-along everyone enjoys together. Music apps like Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music let you download playlists and albums to your phone ahead of time, so they play through the car speakers with no data and no signal needed. Make a playlist of family favorites and kids' songs the night before and download it. Then on the road you've got hours of music ready, whether you connect your phone to the car by Bluetooth or a cable. It's a lovely change from headphones and screens, and shared music has a way of lifting everyone's mood on a long drive through the Ohio countryside. GOOD TO KNOW A downloaded playlist plays through the car speakers with no data use, so the whole family can share the music even where there's no signal. AFTER 29. Clean Up Downloads After the Trip Free up the space for next time. When you're home and the trip's over, take a minute to clean up. Go into each app's Downloads section and delete the movies and shows the kids have finished with. This frees up storage space on the tablet, so it's not full and sluggish, and so there's plenty of room to load up fresh content for the next trip. You can always download the same shows again later if they want to rewatch, since the shows don't go anywhere. It's a two-minute tidy-up that keeps the tablet running nicely. Doing it right after the trip, while you're thinking of it, is easier than discovering a full tablet the night before the next adventure. TIP Delete finished downloads right after the trip, while you remember. A tidy tablet with room to spare makes the next trip's prep a breeze.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

OLDER KIDS

18. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

30. Older Grandkids and Their Own Phones A few words for the teenagers. Older grandkids often have their own phones and will happily sort out their own entertainment, but a couple of reminders help. Encourage them to download their shows and music at home too, so they're not quietly streaming over your hotspot and running up your data. If they'll be using your hotspot, let them know there's a limit and to go easy on the video streaming. And the headphone courtesy still applies, so the whole car isn't subjected to their shows. Teenagers are usually glad to be left to their own devices, pun intended, as long as they know the data ground rules up front. A quick chat before you leave keeps everyone on the same page. WATCH OUT Older kids streaming on your hotspot can quietly use a lot of data. Ask them to download at home and go easy on video over the hotspot. RECAP 31. The Whole Plan at a Glance Everything that makes a peaceful drive. Let me gather it all together. The heart of it is downloading the movies, shows, games, music, and even your map at home on Wi-Fi the night before, so everything plays offline with no data charges and no buffering. Add a sturdy kids' tablet or a child profile with the content locked down, volume-limiting headphones with a splitter for sharing, a seat-back mount, and a way to keep everything charged. Mix in audiobooks and breaks so it's not all screens, and clean up afterward. Do that, and a long drive with the grandkids becomes a genuinely pleasant one, with a calm back seat and no surprise phone bill waiting at the end. Need The answer Entertainment with no data Download at home on Wi-Fi Keep it age-appropriate Kids' profiles and parental controls Two kids, one tablet Headphone splitter Keep it all running Car charger and a power bank

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

TABLETS

19. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

32. Picking a Tablet and a Tough Case The right device survives the back seat. If you're choosing a tablet for the grandkids, a few things matter more than fancy features. Screen size is a comfort thing: a larger screen is easier for two to share, but a smaller one is lighter for little hands to hold. Storage matters because downloaded movies take up room, so a tablet with a bit more storage, or one that accepts a memory card, lets you load up more shows. Most of all, get a sturdy case. Children drop things, and a thick, rubbery case with raised corners can save a tablet from an early death on the floor of the car. Kids' tablets like the Amazon Fire Kids come with such a case built in, which is part of their appeal. If you're handing down an older iPad or Android tablet instead, a protective case and a screen protector are money well spent. You don't need the newest or most expensive tablet for watching downloaded movies in the car; a modest one with plenty of storage and a good case does the job beautifully, and you'll worry far less when it inevitably takes a tumble. A larger screen is easier to share; a smaller one is lighter. More storage, or a memory-card slot, fits more downloads. A thick, rubbery case saves the tablet from drops. A modest tablet is fine; you don't need the newest one. TIP Whatever tablet you use, put it in a tough case before the trip. A dropped-and-cracked tablet is the fastest way to end the back-seat peace.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

LIMITS

20. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

33. Family Link and Screen Time Controlling a shared iPad or Android tablet. If the grandkids use a regular iPad or Android tablet rather than a dedicated kids' one, you still have good tools to keep things safe and limited. On an iPad or iPhone, the feature is called Screen Time, found in Settings, and it lets you set time limits, block mature content, and require your permission for new apps or purchases. On Android tablets, Google's Family Link app does much the same, letting a grown-up set rules and limits from their own phone. Both let you create a child-friendly setup so you can hand over the tablet without worry. It's worth taking a few minutes to set this up before a trip, ideally with a passcode only you know, so a curious child can't simply switch the limits off. These controls are free and built right in, so there's no reason not to use them. If the settings menus look daunting, that's exactly the sort of thing I can set up with you in a few minutes, so the tablet is safe and sensible before the grandkids ever get their hands on it. On an iPad, Screen Time sets limits and blocks mature content. On Android, Google's Family Link does the same from your phone. Use a passcode only you know so limits can't be switched off. Both are free and built in, so set them up before the trip. GOOD TO KNOW These controls let you hand over your own iPad or tablet with confidence, not just a dedicated kids' device. The safety is built right in.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

FREE

21. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

34. Free Shows from the Library Your library card is a quiet entertainment goldmine. Here's a lovely money-saver many families miss: your local library offers free movies, shows, audiobooks, and e-books you can download to a tablet, all with your library card. Apps like Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy connect to the library's digital collection, and with them you can borrow and download children's audiobooks, picture books, and even movies for the trip, at no cost at all. You download them while on Wi-Fi at home, just like the streaming apps, and they play offline in the car. They do return themselves after the borrowing period, so download them close to the trip. For grandparents watching the budget, this is a wonderful way to add variety to the tablet without another subscription. Your Portage County library card unlocks all of it. If you've never set up these apps, it's a simple thing, and I'm glad to help you link your library card and show the grandkids how to browse the children's section, which can become a happy part of trip preparation all on its own. Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy offer free library content. Borrow and download children's audiobooks, books, and movies. Download at home on Wi-Fi; they play offline in the car. Your local library card unlocks it all, at no cost. GOOD TO KNOW Set up the Libby app with your library card and the grandkids can pick free audiobooks for the trip. It's a treat that costs nothing. GET HELP 35. When to Call Bill I'll get the tablets trip-ready with you. If the downloading and settings feel like a lot to sort out before a big trip, give me a call and I'll gladly help. In a short in-home visit I can set up a kids' tablet with safe parental controls, show you how to download from each app so you can do it yourself next time, get the headphones and splitter working, and make sure everything's charged and ready. I'll explain it all in plain English and at your pace, with no rush. With more than thirty years of helping families here in Portage County, I stand behind my work with a friendly guarantee. Call me at (330) 200-8042, and Sophie or I will find a time before you hit the road. No pressure at all.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

CHEAT SHEET

22. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Everyday Cheat Sheet Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task. I want to... Do this I want movies in the car Download them at home on Wi-Fi before you leave Where are my downloads Look for a Downloads section in each app Two grandkids, one tablet A headphone splitter lets them both listen Protect little ears Use volume-limiting kids' headphones A tablet just for the kids Amazon Fire Kids has parental controls built in Don't blow my data Download at home; avoid streaming on a hotspot Tablet keeps dying Keep a car charger or power bank handy Too much screen time Set screen-time limits before the trip Get help Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

HOW I CAN HELP

23. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Your Visit — and My Promise In-home visit — $99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included. Remote Support — $49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the $49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that $49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members ($39/mo). GOOD TO KNOW My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated. Call or text (330) 200-8042 · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Before you leave

Do this the night before.

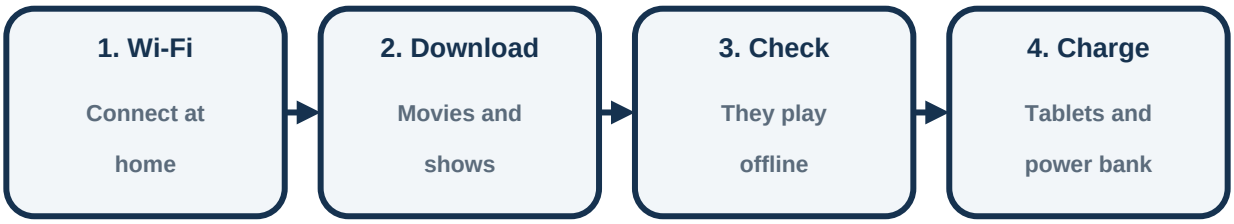

Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

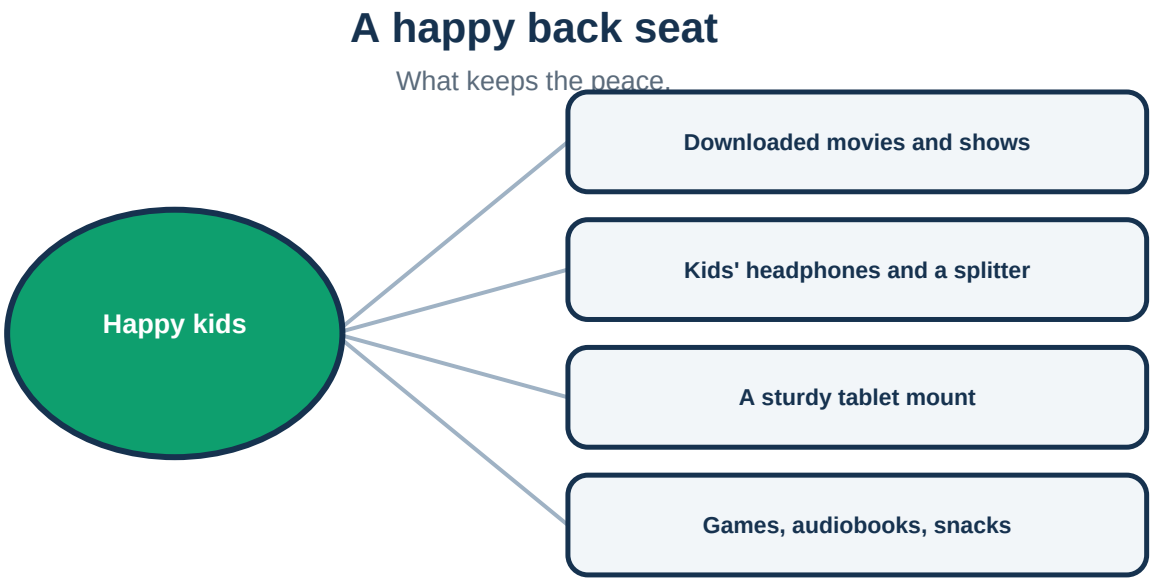

Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk.
For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — $99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — $49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the $49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that $49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members ($39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.