

Managing Technology Use During a Pandemic: Help For Families

In so many ways, technology and social media have come to our rescue over the past eight months (and counting...). They have allowed us to stay connected with work and loved ones from a safe distance, to continue to teach and learn remotely, and to be entertained at home when there is so much less to be found in the way of live entertainment. In some ways, it feels as if there could not have been a better time in history to be stuck in quarantine. That said, as we have often discussed, technology use by children and adolescents comes with an ugly underbelly, including increased rates of depression and anxiety, the fear of missing out, constant comparison with the curated online images posted by others, distraction, and decreased comfort with face-to-face interactions. As with just about everything, it's all about finding a healthy balance.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, through their informative parenting website, [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org), has developed an [interactive tool](#) to help families create a personalized plan for technology use tailored to each child's age, sleep requirements, school and extracurricular commitments, and need for family and downtime. We view this as an engaging and educational project for a family to work on together, as it encourages parents and children to develop plans for screen free zones, screen free times, device curfews, recreational screen time, alternatives to screen time, media manners and good digital citizenship, online safety, and understanding the crucial need for sleep and exercise. Please take a moment to check out this tool and share it with your children.

For more on this topic, we recommend:

[Screenagers Tech Talk Tuesdays](#)

[Common Sense Media](#)

[The Social Dilemma](#)

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project