



## Tips for Supporting Healthy Screen Time & Digital Media Use

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### 1. Design a **Family Media Plan** that includes:

- *Media-free times* (e.g., family dinner) & *media-free zones* (e.g., bedrooms)

### 2. Taper down slowly

- *Gradually* reduce screen time allowance (e.g., if your child spends 4 hours on screens at home, start by reducing to 3 ½ hours)

### 3. Offer replacement activities

- We can't assume that children and teens will know what to do when their device is removed!
- *Give concrete examples* of what your child can do to replace screen time (e.g., get outside, ride a bike, make art, do a puzzle, read, bake, etc.)
- *Plan interactive family or friend time* to replace screen time

### 4. Be consistent

- Provide *clear expectations* and *be consistent* with follow-through on limit-setting around screen time and digital media use

### 5. Co-view media with your child and discuss it, when possible, to increase learning

### 6. Teach boundaries

- Technology and digital media are here to stay – Rather than completely restricting media use or instilling fear, help your child learn to have a healthy relationship with technology

### 7. Model healthy media use

- Examples: Turn off your notifications, limit your own use of phone/computer

### 8. Use your judgement

- Video-chatting with friends/family is different from passive internet scrolling or playing a video game alone
- Using computer time for schoolwork shouldn't necessarily count toward your child's screen time for the day

### 9. Protect bedtime

- Digital media use at night *interferes with sleep quality*
- Limit the use of phones, tablets, and computers at least 1 hour before lights out

### 10. Emphasize Digital Citizenship

- Talk about how to be a *good digital citizen* and discuss the serious effects of online bullying

## *Additional Resources for Families*

- **Internet Guide for Parents** – *Center on Media and Child Health, based out of Boston Children's Hospital*
  - Provides brief information on relationship between media and mental health, physical health, sex, sleep, social skills/relationships, substance use, or time management
  - Offers concrete tips for parents for helping their child manage these areas related to media
- **Family Media Plan** – *American Academy of Pediatrics*
  - Great resource for helping families come up with a tailored plan for healthy family media use
- **Good Digital Parenting Parent Toolkit** – *Research-based toolkit through Family Online Safety Institute*
  - Excellent resource for teaching parents to confidently navigate the internet with their children
  - Two toolkits: 1 for elementary age (6-11 yo) and 1 for teenagers (12yo+)
  - **Includes video series on how to have conversations with kids and teenagers about online safety and being a digital role model**
- **American Academy of Pediatric Screen Time Recommendations**
  - **Children under 18 months old:** avoid media use (except video chatting)
  - **Preschoolers:** <1 hour of high-quality programming/day
  - **Grade-schoolers/teenagers:** Establish consistent limits; don't let media displace other important activities (e.g., quality sleep, regular exercise, family meals, "unplugged" downtime)
- **Additional reputable sources of information:**
  - [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
  - [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)
  - [www.digitalwellnesslab.org](http://www.digitalwellnesslab.org)
  - [www.fosi.org](http://www.fosi.org)

