healthy children.org
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

How to Make a Family Media Use Plan

From TV to smartphones to social media, our lives are
dominated by 24/7 media exposure. Despite this, many
children and teens have few rules around their media
use.

**Parents, help your children balance their online
and off-line lives!**

Create Your Personalized Family Media Use Plan:

Visit HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan
(http://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan) to create a personalized Family Media Use Plan that works within
your family's values and busy lifestyles.

This interactive tool developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) includes a Media Time Calculator that
can give you a snapshot of how much time each child is spending on daily activities, such as sleeping, eating,
homework, physical activity, and media use. It also includes AAP recommendations on screen-free zones, media
manners, and much more.
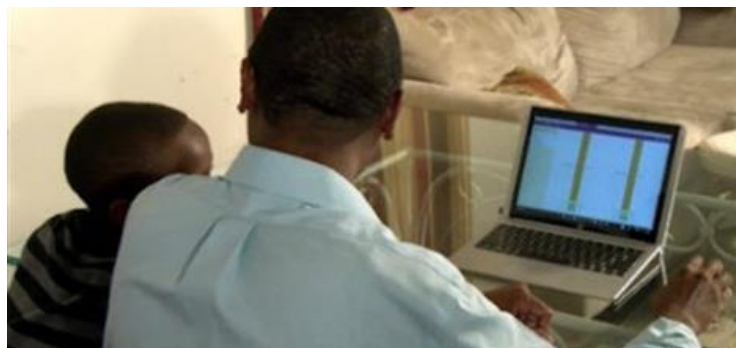
> ### Click to Create Your Family's Media Use Plan Today!
> ### (http://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan)

Media Use Plan Tips for Families:

- Screens should be kept out of kids' bedrooms. Put in place a "media curfew" at mealtime and bedtime, putting all
  devices away or plugging them into a charging station for the night.

- Excessive media use has been associated with obesity (/english/health-
  issues/conditions/obesity/Pages/default.aspx), lack of sleep, school problems, aggression (/English/family-
  life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Aggressive-Behavior.aspx) and other behavior issues
  (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Evaluating-Behavioral-Problems.aspx).
  Limit entertainment screen time to less than one or two hours per day.

- For children under 2, substitute unstructured play and human interaction for screen time. The opportunity to
  think creatively, problem solve and develop reasoning and motor skills is more valuable for the developing
  brain than passive media intake.

- Take an active role in your children's media education by co-viewing programs with them and discussing values
  (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Share-Your-Values.aspx).

- Look for media choices that are educational, or teach good values -- such as empathy, racial and ethnic tolerance.
  Choose programming that models good interpersonal skills for children to emulate.

- Be firm about not viewing content that is not age appropriate: sex, drugs, violence, etc. Movie (/English/family-
  life/Media/Pages/Movie-Ratings-and-What-They-Mean.aspx) and TV ratings (/English/family-
  ~fe/Media/Pages/TV-Ratings-A-Guide-for-Parents.aspx)exist for a reason, and online movie reviews also can
  ~lp parents to stick to their rules.

- The Internet can be a wonderful place for learning. But it also is a place where kids can run into trouble. Keep the computer in a public part of your home, so you can check on what your kids are doing online and how much time they are spending there.

- Discuss with your children that every place they go on the Internet may be "remembered," and comments they make will stay there indefinitely. Impress upon them that they are leaving behind a "digital footprint." They should not take actions online that they would not want to be on the record for a very long time.

- Become familiar with popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You may consider having your own profile on the social media sites your children use. By "friending" your kids, you can monitor their online presence. Pre-teens should not have accounts on social media sites. If you have young children, you can create accounts on sites that are designed specifically for kids their age.

- Talk to them about being good "digital citizens," and discuss the serious consequences of online bullying. If your child is the victim of cyberbullying (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Cyberbullying.aspx), it is important to take action with the other parents and the school if appropriate. Attend to children's and teens' mental health (/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx) needs promptly if they are being bullied online, and consider separating them from the social media platforms where bullying occurs.

- Make sure kids of all ages know that it is not appropriate or smart to send or receive pictures of people without clothing, or sexy text messages (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/the-new-problem-of-sexting.aspx), no matter whether they are texting friends or strangers.

- Check out a sample "Media Time Family Pledge (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Media-Time-Family-Pledge.aspx)" for online media use.

- If you're unsure of the quality of the "media diet" in your household, consult with your children's pediatrician on what your kids are viewing, how much time they are spending with media, and privacy and safety issues associated with social media and Internet use.

Additional Information & Resources:

- Working and Learning From Home During the COVID-19 Pandemic (/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Working-and-Learning-from-Home-COVID-19.aspx)

- Kids & Tech: Tips for Parents in the Digital Age (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Tips-for-Parents-Digital-Age.aspx)

- Healthy Digital Media Use Habits for Babies, Toddlers & Preschoolers (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/healthy-digital-media-use-habits-for-babies-toddlers-preschoolers.aspx)

- Constantly Connected: Adverse Effects of Media on Children & Teens (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/adverse-effects-of-television-commercials.aspx)

- Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-2592) (AAP Policy Statement)

- Media and Young Minds (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-2591) (AAP Policy Statement)

- Children and Adolescents and Digital Media (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-2593) (AAP Technical Report)

Last Updated 11/30/2020
Source American Academy of Pediatrics (Copyright © 2016)