Do not let screen time get in the way of your family’s health! Follow the guidelines in this tip sheet to put screens in their place.
Screens include TVs, computers (including laptops, notebooks, and tablets), video game consoles, and cell phones. They can be powerful tools for learning and working, as well as a fun way to relax.

But too much or poor-quality screen time has been linked to:

- Doing poorly in school.
- Having trouble sleeping.
- Weighing too much.
- Having a poor body image.
- Becoming depressed.
- Being aggressive or violent.
- Becoming sexually active at an earlier age.
- Using tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs.

Screens can also crowd out time for being active, getting enough sleep, and enjoying time with friends and family without screens.

Spending screen-free time with others has countless benefits:

- It teaches kids how to understand their feelings.
- It can help you and your child build a network of support.
- It gives you a chance to model the values and lifestyle habits you want your child to have.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these limits on screen time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Screen time guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–18 months</td>
<td>Avoid any screen media other than video chatting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24 months</td>
<td>If you introduce screens, do so in small amounts. Choose high-quality programs created for toddlers. Watch or play them with your child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–5 years</td>
<td>Limit screen time to an hour per day of high-quality programming. Avoid fast-paced programs, apps with a lot of distracting content, violent media, and ads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 and older</td>
<td>Create a Family Media Use Plan. Make consistent rules, including screen time limits. Stick to the rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have attached a worksheet called Our Family Media Use Plan for you to fill in with your child. Completing and following the plan will take time and effort, but doing so will teach your child:

- How to moderate his or her screen time.
- How to know what is OK and what is not OK for them. This includes both content and the context in which screens are used.
Take action

• Set a goal with your health coach to help you limit your screen time during the coming week. Write your goal here:

______________________________________________________________________________________

• Help your child set his or her goal. Write it here:

______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

• Fill in Part 1 of the attached Our Family Media Use Plan. Work on those changes for several weeks. Afterward, choose a few more changes to work on from the list in Part 1, then fill in Part 2.

Take one step at a time toward healthier habits with screens. You can do it!

The information in this tip sheet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Before making changes, talk to your doctor about what is right for you.

Sources:


Our Family Media Use Plan

Date: _______________________

Part 1. Discuss as a family what screen time limits you should both have. Listen respectfully to each other’s thoughts. Remember to allow enough time each day to:

- Be active (at least 30 minutes a day for you and 60 minutes a day for your child).
- Get enough sleep (7 to 9 hours for you and 9 to 12 hours for your child.)
- Prepare and eat meals and snacks.
- Be together without screens.

Write your screen time limits below. These limits are for screen time spent at home or friends’ houses. They do not include screen time for schoolwork or work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials (include yourself):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday screen time limits (hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday or Sunday screen time limits (hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check a few of the guidelines below that you would like to work on:

- Ask your child to show you the programs, games, and apps he or she uses. Help them remove those that are not OK with you.
- Set up parental controls to block or filter internet content.
- Tell your child that you will be randomly checking what he or she does on screens. Follow through.
- Plan consequences for if your child breaks the media plan rules. Follow through.
- Look for expert advice about choosing media for your child. Try commonsensemedia.org.
- Stop using screen time as a reward or denying it as a punishment.
- Turn off all screens an hour before bedtime. The blue light makes it harder to fall asleep.
- Take all screens out of bedrooms.
- Charge all devices overnight here (NOT in bedrooms): ________________________________
- Keep these places and times free of screens: ________________________________
- Turn off these screens during homework: ________________________________

Part 2. When your family is ready, begin to work on these guidelines:

- (Kids) Ask my parent’s permission before downloading any media.
- (Kids) Avoid games, programs, movies, apps, or any content that is not OK with my parent, whether I am at home or away from home.
- Have a family movie night this often: ________________________________
  (Decide together what to watch. Talk afterward about what both of you liked and did not like.)

We will update this plan on (date): ________________________________