



Family Media Guidelines

As a parent, you should ensure your child has plenty of time for active play outdoors as well as creative, imaginative play. Playing is the best way for a child to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them. However, allowing your child some monitored screen time may also provide another opportunity for them to learn and have some down time.

Some research has found screen-based activities can help children develop language skills and connect socially with long-distance family members. However, there is also research that indicates excessive screen time may lead to harmful outcomes for children such as increases in Body Mass Index (BMI), decreases in sleep, and delays in child development.

For this reason, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly advises parents to monitor and interact with their children during screen time. New "screen time guidelines" have been developed to support parents as they ensure their children have time for hands-on play, interacting with others, and sleeping. The information below intends to help you in manage your child's screen time and develop a media use plan for your entire family.

Strategies for Managing Screen Time



Limit screen time to less than 2 hours per day. Provide specific times for active play.



Continue to check in with your child as they are having screen time so you can monitor what they are watching and for how long.



Create spaces where screen time is not allowed, such as during dinner or social events.



Identify games or shows for your child to play or watch that are educational, age-appropriate, and in line with your values. Some questions to consider when selecting shows or games include the following:



Set rules regarding screen time, and be sure to stick to the rules. Give a 5-4-3-2-1 minute warning, or set a timer to help your child know and prepare for when time is up.

- Does this programming reflect your values in terms of how people treat one another in regards to diversity of gender, race, culture, and ability?
- Is it visually appealing?
- Is it appropriate for their age? Will it make sense to them?
- Will it frighten them? Make them laugh?
- Will it engage them? Stretch their thinking?



Role model appropriate screen time use for your kids by limiting your media use. For example, turn your phone off or set it to "do not disturb" during meals and family time.



Spend time with your child at the screen, and talk about what is happening and how the characters might feel. Ask your child, "What do you see? What do you think is going to happen next?"



Avoid using screen time to calm your upset child, as this may cause them to have problems with managing emotions and setting limits.



Create Your Family Media Plan

We encourage you to make a Family Media Plan, which could help you be clear about your attitudes and expectations about your family's screen time. The AAP has developed a Family Media Use Plan tool that allows families to create a personalized Family Media Plan.

The AAP has also developed a Media Time Calculator that allows parents to calculate how much time their child spends on various activities (e.g., child care, physical activity, meal times) throughout the day to determine how much time they have left for screen time.

You can find both tools here: <https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan>

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Young Minds Policy Statement

This policy statement discusses the literature around children's use of television, videos, and mobile/interactive technologies, and provides guidelines for families on youth media use.

Link to website: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/138/5/e20162591/60503/Media-and-Young-Minds>



Healthy Digital Media Use Habits for Babies, Toddlers, & Preschoolers

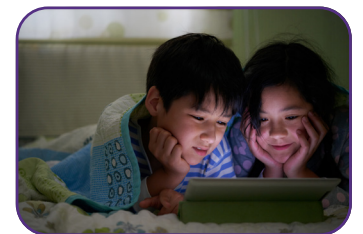
This web page provides detailed information about healthy digital media use for young children. Media use guidelines are discussed, and suggestions for the use of apps and digital books are considered. Tips for limiting media use and developing a family media plan for parents, families, and caregivers are also examined.

Link to website: <https://healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>

Why Limit Your Child's Media Use?

This web page provides information on why media use should be monitored and limited. Facts and tips for healthy media use are discussed.

Link to website: <https://healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/The-Benefits-of-Limiting-TV.aspx>



Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!