

Healthy Media Habits

Students and parents are inundated with media content these days. Media, and the devices that go along with media consumption, such as smart phones, tablets, and computers offer many great benefits. Video chatting keeps us connected to our loved ones that are far away, and interactive programs provide students with opportunities for connection, learning and peer collaboration. However, too much screen time can have negative effects for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that too much screen time can disrupt sleep, and take away from other important activities such as exercise. Excessive screen time and internet use has also been linked to isolation and depression.

Developing healthy media habits will look different for each family. It can be helpful to make a media plan for your family. Here are some suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics for what to consider when making your family media plan:

- For children ages 6 years and older, set consistent media use limits that factor in other health-promoting activities such as physical activity, sleep, family meals, school and friends.
- Help your child select educational media that encourages creativity.
- Co-view the content or co-play with your child.
- Discourage entertainment media while children are doing homework, and make sure children don't sleep with devices in their bedrooms.
- Implement media-free zones.
- Serve as positive role models on healthy media use.

Making a change in the routine at home, especially if this change means getting kids off their screen, can be challenging. AAP has created an online tool to help families create an individualized media plan. The plan walks you through many of the suggestions listed above and creates a daily usage schedule for each member of the family. To try it out, click [HERE](#). Additionally, here are some tips from Common Sense Media to help get kids off their device:

- Have another activity lined up and get them excited about what's coming up next!

- Use visual and sound cues to help kids keep track of time limits.
- Find apps with built-in timers or have a visual timer within view.
- Tell kids to stop at a natural break, such as the end of an episode, level, or activity.
- Discuss consequences and follow through when kids test the limits.
- Read the full article [HERE!](#)

Help your students make informed media choices and find a healthy balance.
Video and lesson plan [here](#).